Week ending May 2 1953
Every Wednesday Fourpence

JOHN BULL

CORONATION STAGE MANAGER

A frank profile of David Eccles, M.P.

by WILFRED GREATOREX

"A PLACE FOR JOE"— the Cup Final story of a Soccer star

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF MINE HOST

Photographed by GEOFFREY GILBERT

IF YOU THINK a landlord's life is 'all beer and skittles' you're in for an eye-opener. The landlord of 'The Local' has to work hard to build up a successful career at the bar. He doesn't open his activities at opening time. Mine Host's been doing a host of things since a very early hour. Come behind the scenes and see how the landlord prepares to welcome the world and his wife.

RISE AND SHINE! *Every glass in the House must be spotless and sparkling by the time the customers come in.*

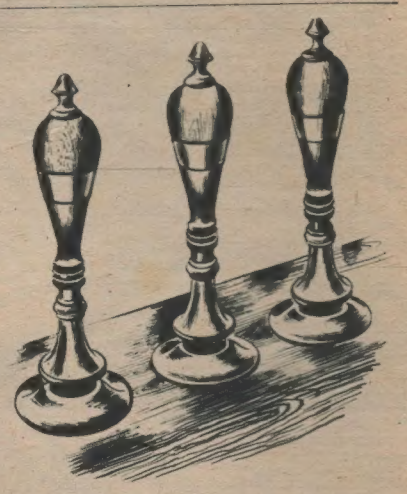
OUT WITH THE EMPTIES — *in with the full. Lights, Browns, Stouts — there must be enough of all kinds to go round.*

HERE COMES A BARREL *of the best. It's up to the landlord to see that a good brew is well kept. Down it goes, into the cool, cool cellar — under the watchful eye of Mine Host.*

MINE HOSTESS, *too, has lots to do. There are fillings for sandwiches to be bought and good things for snacks at the bar.*

TIME TO TAP *a new one. Later it must be carefully tested by the landlord to see that it comes through clear.*

THIS IS WHERE YOU COME IN. *To a genial 'Good Evening' from Mine Host, to good talk and good company — to a good glass of beer. Now you know what it's like to be the man who gets it ready for you.*



'Evening all,' said the Regular Customer, whose pint stood ready on the bar before he had time to close the door.

He lifted the beer to the light and regarded it with satisfaction. 'First to-day,' he said, drinking deeply.

'You needed that,' said the landlord resting his elbows on the counter.

'I did,' replied the Regular Customer. 'A man with a good day's work behind him needs a pint of ale in front of him.'

'Inside him you mean,' said the landlord's daughter smiling prettily.

'True,' replied the Regular Customer, 'but all in good time. Beer is the most wholesome drink on earth and deserves respect.

Let's have one at the Local

ISSUED BY THE BREWERS' SOCIETY, 42 PORTMAN SQUARE, LONDON, W.1

EDITORIAL

Tough Customs

A HUNDRED THOUSAND smuggled cigarettes were found in a taxi at Plymouth last year. The smuggler was fined and so was the taxi-driver.

The owners of the taxi had nothing to do with the smuggling, but the Customs nevertheless confiscated it. To get it back they had to pay £250.

Fortunately, this piece of legal highway robbery by officialdom ended happily. The Customs finally paid back the £250 they had extorted.

WHEN the case was in court a vigorous protest came from Mr. W. E. Major, a Plymouth solicitor. "Surely," he said, "these powers of the Customs to confiscate are too great and should be curbed?"

JEAN SIMMONS
The £3,000 threat

He will find many supporters among the ten million travellers who will run the gauntlet of Her Majesty's Customs officers at seaports and airports this year.

Legitimate revenue must be collected, and fair penalties inflicted on offenders. But the charge is that the Customs authorities sometimes act unfairly and high-handedly.

PETTY acts of Customs tyranny cause bad feeling against this country.

Luigi Infantino, the singer, was amazed and angry when charged £7 duty on £100 worth of clothes collected in Italy for flood victims.

Jean Simmons was not allowed to wear, on a visit here, the diamond engagement ring Stewart Granger gave her unless she paid £3,000 in tax and duty. "I shall just have to wait until I get back to America," she said, and was made to leave her ring with the Customs.

Somerset Maugham suddenly received a peremptory Customs notice saying that two books sent him from America would be destroyed unless he produced an import licence. Not merely held up—but destroyed!

BUT these are the troubles of celebrities. Think of the hundreds of obscure, unknown victims.

The Customs rake in more than £1,200 millions a year. Yet they do not issue, to warn the public, any simple booklet explaining their powers and penalties.

"Read the law" is their only official advice. The law is an Act of 234 pages, costing 6s. a copy! This fat volume too seldom defines their power. Again and again occur the ominous words, "The Commissioners shall, *if they see fit. . . .*"

It is a pity that Parliament normally passes the annual Customs and Excise Bill almost without debate. M.P.s would do a public service if they examined it for examples of vague and excessive power. And then curbed it.

THIS WEEK'S COVER

CHARLES WOOD has many interests, and figure drawing, animals and gardening are a few he has collected for this week's painting. His model is an Irish friend's daughter who is just a little too big for her seven years, and whose spaniel takes an expressive view of her photographic efforts. Wood has no idea if her tartan is genuine: he made it up. The narcissi were a chancy afterthought—but some varieties do bloom in May.

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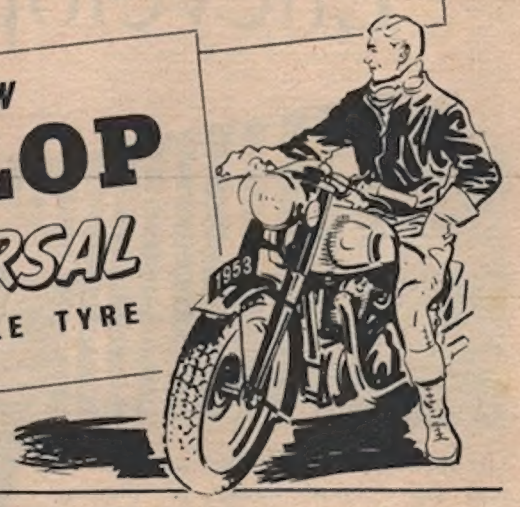

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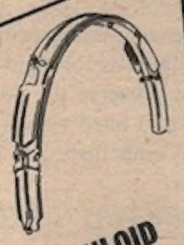

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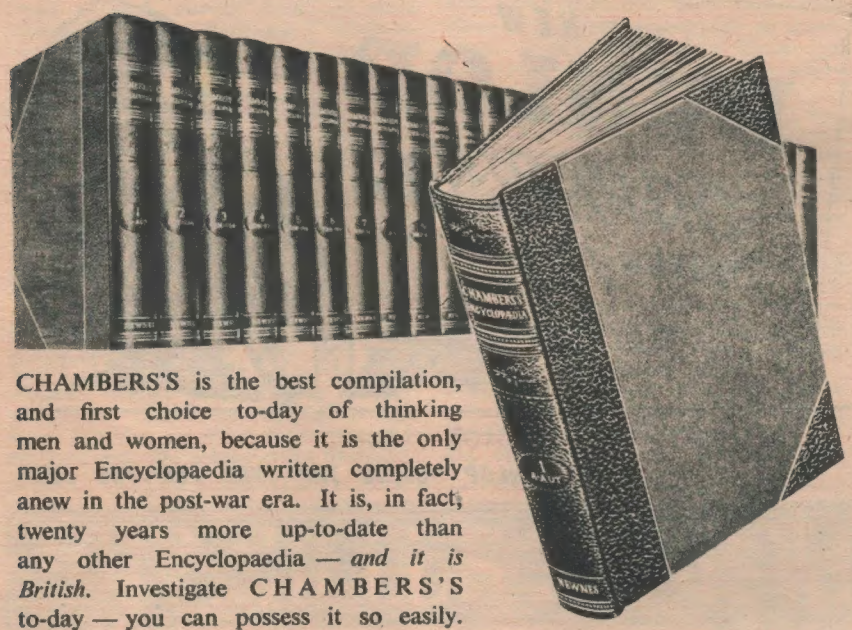

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FREE SPEECH

Britain—the country I don't know

OPPOSITE me in a train from the coast last week sat an American visitor, who had just landed in this country on a Coronation year visit. We chatted for a while, and then he added: "I'm staying on after the Coronation—maybe you can tell me what I should see while I'm in Britain?"

Somewhat naturally, I began with London. "There's Buckingham Palace, Westminster Abbey, the Tower of London . . ." and I added a few more. "That's fine," he said, "but I don't want to spend all my time in London. What about the rest of the country? Where can I find the friendliest people, the most beautiful scenery? Where can I see the true Britain, and learn about her history?" Although I managed some more information, I felt that, when it came to the test, I knew little about my own country. During my holiday, I shall try to recapture some of our national heritage.—R. L. S., St. Albans, Hertfordshire.

Life Without Sight

"THOUSANDS of totally blind people have mastered their blindness in a way known only to themselves," wrote John Coltman in his article "I Learn To Live In Twilight" (JOHN BULL, March 28). As one of those people, I can say that all the remaining senses become more acute. Snow is the blind man's fog, for all sounds are deadened. When I visited the House of Commons recently, I lost all sense of direction, for my seat was fitted with a loudspeaker, and the voices all came from the same place.—ALISTAIR GREWAR, Crown Street, Inverness.

Four Sun Service

I SPENT Easter in an hotel where the food was bad, the beds were uncomfortable and the water was cold. I am convinced that our hotels should display some sort of efficiency mark—as is done in the Channel Islands.—G. S. LAW, London, S.W.15.

There are two voluntary registers for hotels in the Channel Islands, with a third for guest houses. Top hotels on the first register display four suns, with other ratings down to one sun. Second register hotels are awarded diamonds on a similar scale. French hotel experts drew up the scheme, which watches points like food, beds, service—and the temperature of water in "Hot" taps.

Pikelets For Tea

HARRY HOPKINS is wrong when he says the people of the Potteries would never go without pikelets for breakfast. On Sunday morning, we enjoy *oatcakes* with bacon and cheese.—MRS. V. BULL, Dennington Crescent, Stoke-on-Trent.

Pikelets are, in fact, a teatime delicacy for Potteries folk. The second of Harry Hopkins's "Journey Into Britain" articles will appear in JOHN BULL *on May 16.*

Polished Performance

FRED LAURENT'S illustration of the Commando assault on Dieppe (JOHN BULL, April 4) shows the troops going into action with highly polished brass buckles. I had always believed that bright metal was dulled to prevent it reflecting light and attracting the enemy's attention. Were the Commandos an exception?—P. FLYNN, Quinton, Birmingham.

"In 1942—the time of the Dieppe raid—spit and polish was still very important in the army," comments Fred Laurent. "A general instruction on the dulling of brass before action came much later in the war."

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

Beginning a new serial

THE MARAS AFFAIR

by Eliot Reed

See announcement on page 12

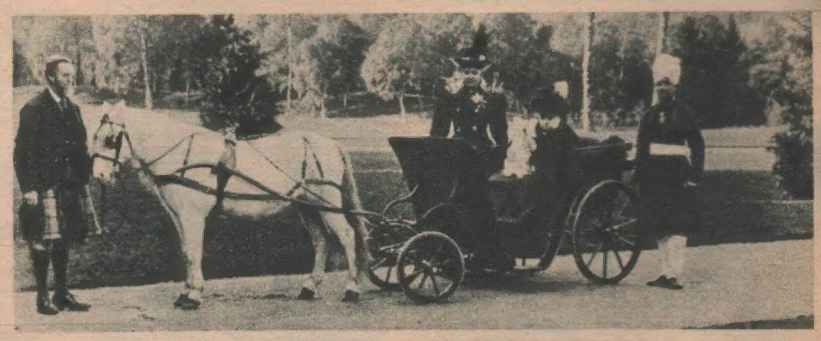
Lifelong Friends

SOME of the best children's stories portray the mouse, the rabbit, and other destructive creatures as kindly and lovable characters. After steeping myself in such tales when young, I cannot bear to set a mousetrap, and the thought of rabbit pie revolts me. Why fill children's minds with such thoughts if, in later life, they are expected to kill and even eat their former friends?—M. G., Huddersfield.

Army In Embryo?

MOST people do not realize the number of Germans serving in the French Foreign Legion. I have just returned to this country as an ex-legionnaire, and I feel that I have served in a German army—not a French one. About 120 young Germans are smuggled out of Germany

New Light On Royal Photograph



MY grandmother identified two of the people Queen Mary could not name in the captions she wrote for JOHN BULL'S exclusive Balmoral photographs. The Highlander whom she described as "*not* John Brown" is George Gordon. The Indian orderly is Abdul Khayrim.—LENA CRUIKSHANK, Crathie, Ballater, Aberdeenshire.

Only one person remains unidentified in this photograph—the lady-in-waiting at Queen Victoria's side.

every week; they are given old French uniforms to wear as they pass through the French zone into France. They travel by boat from Marseilles to Oran, and from there by cattle-trains to Sidi-Bel-Abbès. Most of the security men who screen recruits at H.Q. were members of the Afrika Korps, and they treat recruits with contempt. I have seen a German boy of eighteen leave H.Q. with his face covered in blood. He had not answered the questions "suitably." I feel that these German legionnaires will one day return to Germany to form the nucleus of a new German army. — TERENCE MEAD, Gordon Road, London, S.E.15.

Caught On The Hop

WELLINGTON boots have always been a snare for my husband. When my eldest daughter was a toddler, she could not resist dropping odd articles inside them. Putting his Wellingtons on, my husband would give a yell of anguish and extract a lump of coal, a toy car, or even a knife and fork. My two-year-old is carrying on the good work; my husband recently found to his horror that the youngster had emptied his drink inside.—MRS. W. ALEXANDER, Southampton.

Alsatians Excluded

IN his article on Spratts's livestock shipping service (JOHN BULL, April 4), Ronald Clark mentioned that Australia forbids the import of Alsatians. As a dog lover, I wonder if there is a special reason.—MISS B. G., Portsmouth.

Australia banned Alsatians about forty years ago, although there are still a few descendants of dogs brought in before then. Main reason for their exclusion is the fear that they might breed with the native wild dog—the dingo—and produce a ferocious new race.

Atlantic Meeting

I READ with interest Guy Angus's article on Dr. Bombard (JOHN BULL, April 11), for I was on board the s.s. Arakaka when she sighted his

Dr. Bombard on his raft. A photograph taken by Mrs. Brown from the Arakaka

raft in the Atlantic in December, 1952. I had the great pleasure of being introduced to him. He looked well, but thin, with a beard and long, curly hair. I noted in my diary at the time that "for all his hardship, he had retained the Frenchman's flair for saying the right thing to a woman." As he went back to his frail craft, he waved goodbye. We sounded three farewell blasts on the ship's siren, and dipped our flag. Away in his lonely boat, he dipped the Tricolour of France in reply. We were truly thankful to hear that he had reached land.—MRS. W. H. BROWN, Stanley Avenue, Wallasey, Cheshire.

Save Our Sons

READING a report on road accidents the other day, I noticed that of the 15,000 children killed on the roads since 1940, 10,000 were boys and 5,000 were girls. To me, the moral for parents is clear—"Take care of your daughter, but very much more care of your son." — W. H. GRIFFITHS, Stoke-on-Trent.

This is sound advice. It is a fact that twice as many boys as girls are killed on the roads. Sir Frederick Mander, former general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, spoke on this point at the 1952 National Safety Congress. "Don't accept the fact that boys will be boys," he urged. "Boys and girls must be equally trained in road sense. We have got to 'Save Our Sons.'"

Reflected Enemy

AT the bottom of our garden, we have an old potting shed, whose glass roof has been covered with corrugated iron. I noticed that a blackbird had developed the habit of flying through a broken window

and spending most of the day inside, hurling himself at the roof. He began to show signs of wear and tear, and I decided to block up the hole. When I went into the shed, I solved the mystery. On bright days, the glass roof acted as a mirror. "Blackie" had been attacking his own reflection —which he thought was an intruder on his domain. I whitewashed the glass, and he is now building a nest in the shed.—G. F. BARKER, Goldington Road, Bedford.

Time, Gentlemen

YOUR Editorial, "Are They Open?" (JOHN BULL, April 11) will be read with interest by all connected with the trade. My father is a licensed victualler, and for six days of the week he opens from 11.30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and again from 5.30 p.m. to 10 p.m. Except on Saturdays, it is ridiculous for him to waste fuel, light and labour when he has few customers before midday and 7 p.m. He knows he will do little business—yet he is compelled by law to open for the full time. — D. T. HARRIS, Feltham, Middlesex.

"The only law affecting hours defines the maximum number," says the Licensed Victuallers' Association. "But if a licensee persistently opened late and closed early, the police might oppose renewal of his licence, saying that there was not enough demand."

Cape Of Good Use

CYCLING capes are useful things to have on holiday—even in the finest weather. My friends and I use ours as bathing tents. Wearing them, we can change easily and comfortably on

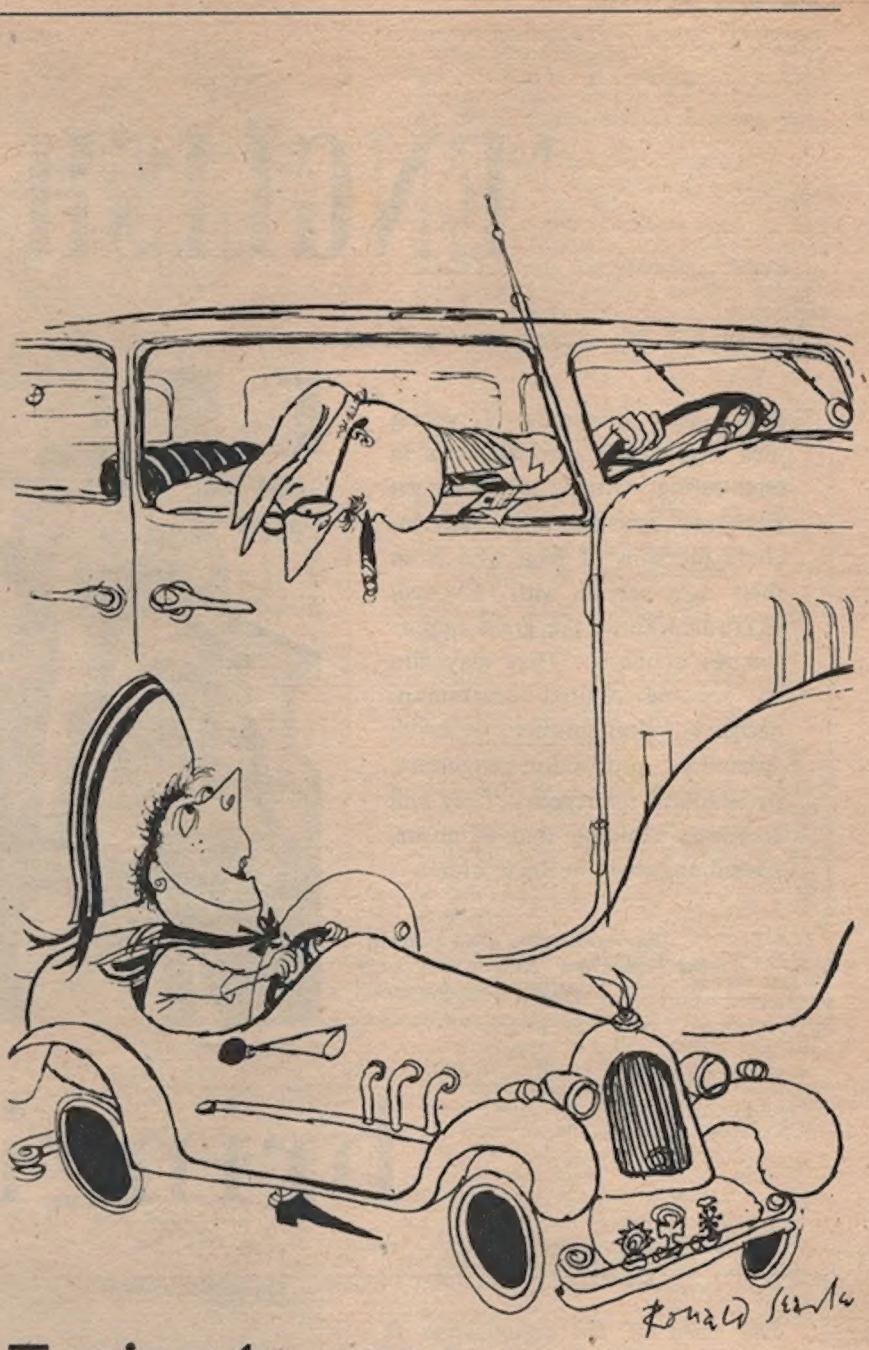
the beach. Afterwards, we wrap our wet bathing things inside them. On picnics, our capes make perfect groundsheets.—N. W. DASH, Greenvale Road, London, S.E.9.

Rejected Jam Jars

A FEW days ago, I took some empty jam jars to my grocer. He wasn't interested in them. Yet I thought there was a shortage of bottles and jars.—H. C., Parkstone, Dorset.

"It's not economic to sterilize bottles and jars and use them again," explains the Board of Trade. "During the war they were collected as salvage and broken up for the glass. Today, the supply of glass is much better, but some local councils still sort the bottles out of the rubbish."

Letters intended for publication should be as brief as possible and include the sender's full name and address. John Bull pays a guinea for every letter printed. Readers with personal problems should send inquiries (other than medical) to John Bull Free Advice Service with a stamped addressed envelope for reply.



Trying to pass, you little superman?

I'm not a superman—but Daddy is.

Oh he is, is he?

Yes—he's a BP Superman!

What's that?

It's a man who's kind to his car by giving it BP Super—the new super-performance petrol.

What does BP Super do?

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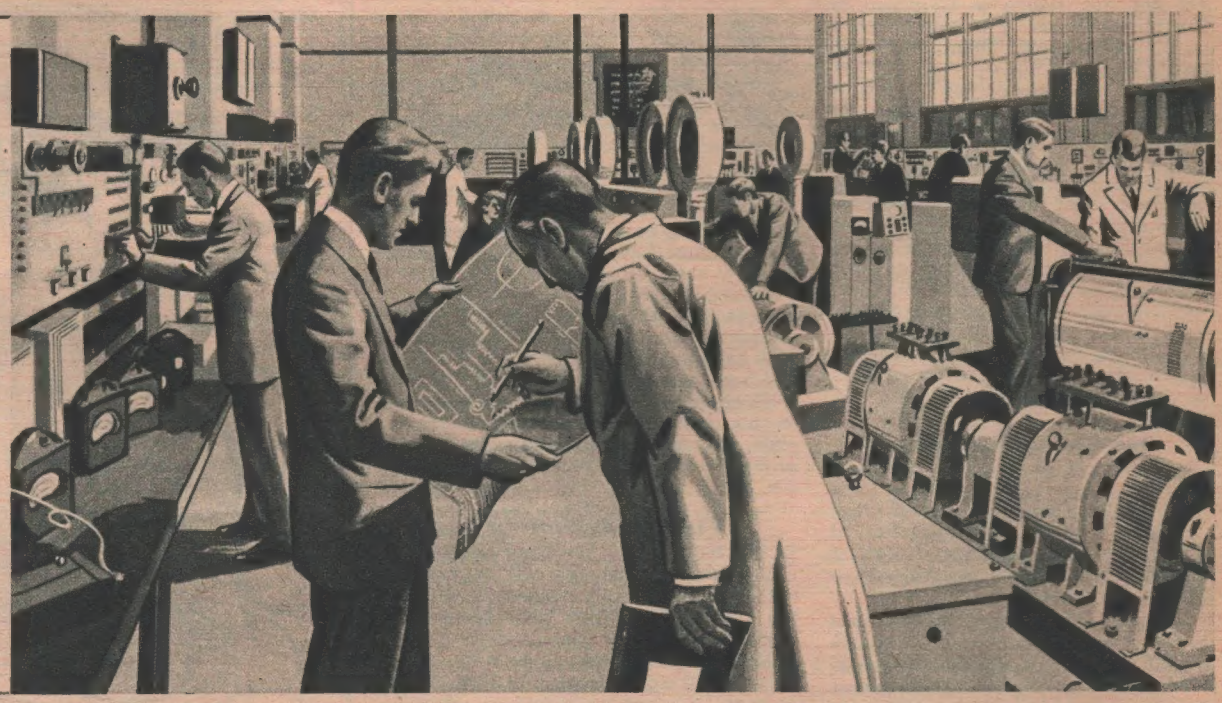

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I was just recovering from a slap in the face when Blue Dancy appeared at the door. "What's up?" he bellowed. "Are you assaulting my daughter?"

THE GOLDMINE IN OUR GARDEN

by JON CLEARY

We'd all be rich! We'd be flaming millionaires! And I could marry Grace. Even her horrible Pa couldn't object to me now

WE WERE JUST ABOUT to sit down to Sunday dinner when Dad discovered gold in the backyard. We thought he was off his rocker at first, but we all trooped out to the yard and, sure enough, he was right. He had been digging a hole to bury some bottles from last night's party, and had dug much deeper than he ever had before. We stood there looking down into the hole, and I'd seen enough rough ore to know that what was glinting down there was gold, all right, good Australian gold.

"We'll be flaming millionaries," said Dad.

Nobody could think of a thing to say. We just stood there, dreaming of the life of luxury ahead. And then Mum collected herself and said that the corned beef and cabbage would be stone cold, and we all trooped back into the house again.

Well, we had dinner, then sat back and discussed ways of working the mine. Dad sent young Wally out to sit by the mine, as a sort of claim post, then he started detailing jobs for the rest of us. If there was one thing he loved, it was arranging things.

He nominated himself as foreman, I was given the job of book-keeper, because I'm the educated one in the family, Mick and Dinny were tabbed as diggers, Shirl and Min were taken on as sluicers, and Wally and young Else were listed as messengers and general handykids. We all went out to the hole again.

"First thing tomorrow morning," Dad said, "we go down and register our claim."

"What about work?" said Mick, who works down at the abattoirs with Dinny. "We can't all take the day off just because we discovered gold."

"It might peter out," said Min, who is Mick's

ILLUSTRATED BY MORDEN

Continued on page 20

Eccles studies a model of Westminster Abbey. His aim: "the loveliest and best"

With his wife and son Simon, Eccles relaxes at his Wiltshire home.

David Eccles, hustling showman of the Coronation

by WILFRED GREATOREX

Behind the mighty effort to prepare for next month's pageantry stands the minister who will tear up tradition by the roots or tread on other people's toes to get what he wants

HER MAJESTY'S MINISTER OF WORKS was in a fix. From the architects' plans set before him one May morning last year he could see that too many official guests would be chasing too few Coronation seats outside Westminster Abbey. As stage manager and general factotum for the occasion, he regarded one lot of places as inviolate. "I had made up my mind," recalls David McAdam Eccles, "that the stand in the middle of Parliament Square should be reserved for Commonwealth guests."

This raised the problem of where to put United Kingdom representatives. Only one site seemed right and proper—St. Margaret's churchyard. This, however, was to be sold by the church authorities to ticket agencies. Eccles saw his chance. Next day he met the St. Margaret's lawyer and Sir John Crowder, a churchwarden, in his office at the ministry. Several agencies were just then dickering over the price they should bid. But Eccles promptly made a firm offer. When the deal was signed, Eccles let some of the agencies have a government stand "as compensation." He admits he came out of the two deals showing a profit.

This stroke of public enterprise is in keeping with the character and career, if not the political philosophy, of Eccles, a shrewd, suave and icily aloof ex-City financier who is reputed to have made a fortune through wise dealing by the time he was thirty.

Has Taken Eden's Place

At forty-eight, the Conservative Member for Chippenham, Wiltshire, is as physically striking as he is resourceful; he was recently described by a political opponent as "the man who took Anthony Eden's place—as the best-dressed man in the government." He has bright brown eyes, greying hair sleeked back thickly at the sides, a Red Indian complexion, a deeply dimpled chin and a lop-sided laugh. "He's always looking towards the top," says a friend, "and he's well endowed for the climb. He has money, youth, good health, brains, exceptional taste and an attractive wife. It's a pity he doesn't mask his ambitions a little." In fact, Eccles oozes a vast confidence in himself and all his works, which are many and bright and carefully geared to the taxpayers' pound sterling.

Latterly, as the Earl Marshal's Coronation handyman (his own description), Eccles has been spending about a million pounds of public money on spectators' stands, a theatre inside Westminster Abbey and an annexe costing £50,000 outside, electrical installations, street decorations, flood-lighting, flowers, fireworks and ticket allocations to government departments, trade unions and local authorities. His ministry is also responsible for catering facilities on June 2.

All this has meant acquiring quantities of timber, steel scaffolding, cotton, nylon and silk drapes, eleven acres of growing flowers, carpets, tapestries, satin for the Regalia Table, a Cloth of Gold, as well as two hundred chairs and 5,700 stools padded with blue velour and braided with gold for the Abbey congregation. Coats of Arms, Union Jacks and Commonwealth emblems have

His modernizing ideas shocked some of his staff

been specially manufactured, and Eccles ordered a Wedgwood dinner service for the Foreign Secretary's banquet to the Queen and the Diplomatic Corps on June 6.

Shortly after King George VI's funeral in February, 1952, Eccles called his ministry's high officials to the conference room and there outlined his Coronation needs. "Remember," he said in a strident voice, "that we've had a war since the last Coronation. The social gulf is narrowed, Commonwealth countries have grown up, our Sovereign is a young and beautiful woman and the government is already spending too much money." Ever since, he has been stressing at one meeting after another that he expects "the loveliest and best," yet, says a subordinate, he always has an eye on the main chance to economize. "All our scaffolding," declares Eccles, "is hired. The timber for stands is being cut in such lengths that it will be resellable. And we intend to put many of the fabrics on sale afterwards."

By tradition, peers and peeresses are allowed to buy their Abbey chairs. When told of this privilege, Eccles admitted that he had had thoughts of selling them for dollars as souvenirs. "He then had the notion of having five thousand extra stools made just as mementoes," says one of those present.

A Job That Surprised Him

Eccles was the last man named for a Ministry in Winston Churchill's government late in 1951. Critics inside and against his own party thought him better fitted for the Board of Trade or Treasury, where his economic talents might have had more scope. It was known that Eccles himself was surprised at being given what was considered a minor post. "As it turned out," says John Rodgers, M.P. for Sevenoaks and now Eccles's Parliamentary Private Secretary, "the Coronation made a big difference. David couldn't have been a rounder peg in a rounder hole. He had a chance to use his aesthetic talents as well as his financial ones."

A connoisseur of painting, pottery and old books, Eccles has been putting his cultivated layman's knowledge into almost daily practice from the day the Coronation hustle began. He has been ruthless in throwing out plans and designs that have not matched his ideas, and has stifled suggestions he regarded as old-fashioned. To one civil servant who thought the annexe should be built in Gothic style, he snapped: "I want no 'pseudo-anything' in this show. This is the twentieth century. I like the age we live in and you've got to like it, too."

His insistence on modernizing points of procedure, layout and display has shocked some of his subordinates trained in the Ancient Monuments division of the ministry. "Where precedent conflicts with the age in which we live," says one official, "he tears it up by the roots." At one meeting, the colour of the carpeting for the Abbey was being discussed. Eccles heard the others out, then said finally: "We want no patterned stuff this time. It must be self-coloured carpet—some in gold, the rest in blue."

Leaves Nothing To Chance

Not all Eccles's ideas have been either sound or modern. One plan for decorating the Mall had taken no account of public safety in case a gale arose. His intervention in the fine detail of Coronation planning makes him a hard taskmaster for the experts. "He drove his contractors like one of Pharaoh's slave-masters," it was recently said of him. "They soon got ahead of schedule." Once, he sent a memo asking the size and cost of table napkins to be used at the buffet lunch in the Abbey annexe. When a surveyor's report indicated that the stonework restoration on the Houses of Parliament would not be finished in time, Eccles went to see for himself, ascending the 392-foot Victoria Tower in a builder's hoist. One afternoon last summer, an official made the mistake of saying: "Oh, that will be all right on the day." Eccles rounded on him and said coldly: "It will be all right this week. And I *must* see it myself."

Eccles has little time for the circuitous ways of bureaucrats and goes about his ministry in a direct manner that does not please all who work under him. "This," remarked one civil servant after Eccles's first Coronation pep-talk, "isn't going to be the picnic 1937 was." When he saw he would need an adviser on flowers, Eccles remembered Constance Spry. "I was out in the garden of my home near Windsor," says Mrs. Spry. "My secretary asked the caller to hold on. I expected it would be an official. To my amazement it was the Minister himself, asking if I would like to help with the Coronation."

Treading On People's Toes

For all his impatience with bureaucratic practices, however, Eccles has brought only three outsiders into his creative team—Constance Spry, Professor Robert Gooden, who designed the blue and gold drapes inside the Abbey, and James Woodford, the sculptor.

A number of private architects and designers confidently expected commissions—but none came. "There is plenty of talent inside this ministry," says Eccles. "I thought it only fair to let them get on with what is a gay and colourful job. It's a change from building post offices and atomic plants." The move was variously interpreted by his critics. "He was just being shrewd as usual," says one. "Temperamental freelances might have rebelled when he pushed his nose too far into their work."

Eccles's relations with friends, politicians and ministry subordinates derive nothing from his smooth appearance. He is frank, has what a party associate calls an arrogant charm, and inclines to tread heavily on people's toes. Recently, pressed by the need for more Coronation accommodation for civil servants, he asked several government offices in Whitehall to give up some of their window-places. The idea got a cool reception. "Tell them," Eccles curtly instructed an official, "that unless they behave generously they will get no stand seats at all."

The Eccles brush-off is already well known. He sees no cause to indulge in small-talk or to hide his real feelings about anything. An influential constituent, who had met him at dinner the previous night for the first time, rang up a local Conservative official to complain about "our Member's dictatorial manner." Eccles, who is easier of mien with people he knows well, is nevertheless noted at the House of Commons for his discriminating choice of company in the smoking-room. "When he does come in," says one M.P., "he is careful with whom he sits. Even then, he stays only a minute or two."

Despite his uncompromising nature and air of well-bred bellicosity, Eccles has a keen sense of public relations. When he commissioned Woodford to sculpt ten Queen's Beasts for the front of the annexe—"I dreamt of these fairy-tale creatures," he said—he announced to a press conference that they would "wear expressions of ferocious loyalty on their aristocratic faces." The phrase went round the world. "Nearly every newspaper used it," says Brian Barker, the ministry's information officer, whose work is eased but enlarged by Eccles's headline flair.

Eccles sees the Coronation as the best propaganda chance Britain has had for a very long time, and goes to extremes to see that reporters, cameramen and broadcasters will have first-rate facilities. His special arrangements for coverage have cost £11,000, all of which he aims to recover from those using them. "For every hundred thousand people who watch the Coronation through their own eyes," Eccles likes saying, "a hundred million will watch through the eyes of reporters and cameramen." A three-dimensional film is being made, but it is the colour film that excites Eccles. "Technique has improved enormously since last time," he says. "It should be the finest colour film ever made and the greatest instrument for British Monarchy. Even Cecil B. de Mille can't put on a background like our Coronation."

As pageant-master, Eccles arranged a private showing for his ministry associates some time ago of a black-and-white film of the 1937 Coronation. He made notes on a writing pad. One of these related to King George's arrival

Continued on page 28

Eccles sees one of his "Queen's Beasts" take shape. His phrase about it went round the world

AFTER THE FUNERAL

by AGATHA CHRISTIE

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM LITTLE

Poirot knew who the murderer was—but he had to have proof. Till then he'd play at cat and mouse. It was a game that he always enjoyed to the full

CORA LANSQUENET HAD BEEN battered to death with a hatchet. The day before, she had asked awkward questions after the funeral of her brother, Richard Abernethie. "But he *was* murdered, wasn't he?" she had said. And Miss Gilchrist, her companion-help, had said she'd heard Richard telling Cora that someone was trying to poison him.

Mr. Entwhistle, Richard's solicitor, had brought the case to Hercule Poirot—and one of the first things that occurred to the great Belgian detective was that Miss Gilchrist might be in danger. As though confirming his fears, Miss Gilchrist was taken ill: she had eaten poisoned wedding cake.

But she soon recovered and joined the family at Enderby, the Abernethie country mansion, where Poirot had already installed himself as M. Pontarlier, who was buying the house for U.N.A.R.C.O., an imaginary organization for foreign refugees. He believed that only Helen, Richard's favourite relative, knew his real identity until Rosamund, Richard's pretty young

Rosamund turned, and her eyes met Poirot's calmly. "The point is," she said, "that I've got to make a big decision. Michael doesn't know yet"

niece, blurted out in front of the family that she had known all along he was a detective.

The next morning Helen phoned Mr. Entwhistle in London. She had been persistently nagged by a mental picture of the scene at Enderby when Cora had exploded *her* bombshell—"But he *was* murdered, wasn't he?" . . . Something about the scene was wrong, some visual detail that, until now, had eluded her.

"It came to me," she told Mr. Entwhistle, "when I was looking in the glass last night. . . ."

That was all she said. The solicitor heard a strangled cry, followed by a thud. Then the line went dead. Helen had been silenced.

FINAL INSTALMENT

Mr. Entwhistle's Assignment

It was not until nearly an hour later that Mr. Entwhistle, after a great deal of conversation with supervisors and others, found himself speaking to M. Poirot.

"Thank heaven! At last!" said Mr. Entwhistle with pardonable exasperation. "The exchange seems to have had the greatest difficulty in getting the number."

"That is not surprising. The receiver was off the hook." There was a grim quality in Poirot's voice which carried through to the listener.

Mr. Entwhistle said sharply: "What on earth has been happening?"

"Mrs. Leo Abernethie was found by the housemaid about twenty minutes ago lying by the telephone extension in the study. She was unconscious. A serious concussion."

"Do you mean she was struck on the head?"

"I think so. It is just possible that she fell and struck her head on a marble doorstop, but me, I do not think so, and the doctor, he does not think so, either."

"She was telephoning me at the time. I wondered, when we were cut off so suddenly."

"What did she say?"

"She mentioned to me some time ago that on the occasion when Cora Lansquenet suggested her brother had been murdered, she herself had a feeling of something being wrong—odd. She did not quite know how to put it. Unfortunately, she could not remember *why* she had that impression."

"And suddenly, she did remember, and rang you up to tell you?"

"Yes."

"What exactly did she say?"

"She said it had suddenly occurred to her when she was looking in the glass—something about one of the people present at Enderby."

"She gave no hint as to—which of the people concerned it was?"

"I should hardly fail to let you know if she had told me *that*," said Mr. Entwhistle acidly.

"I apologize, *mon ami*. Of course."

Mr. Entwhistle said: "We shall have to wait until she recovers consciousness before we know. Is she with you at Enderby?"

"No, I do not think she would be safe here. I arranged for an ambulance which has taken her to a nursing home where she will have special nurses and where no one, family or otherwise, will be allowed to see her at all."

Poirot surveyed his audience. With full dramatic effect, he announced: "The riddle is solved"

Mr. Entwhistle sighed. He sounded moved. "You relieve my mind. I have a great regard for Helen Abernethie. I always have had. A woman of very exceptional character."

"Yes, yes," said M. Poirot. "But now, there is a little commission that I have for you. You must prepare to make a journey. But do not worry, it will not take you very far from London. You will travel to Bury St. Edmunds—*ma foi!* what names your English towns have!—and there you will hire a car and drive to Forsdyke House. It is a mental home. Ask for Dr. Penrith and inquire of him particulars about a patient who was recently discharged. The name of the patient is Gregory Banks. Find out for what form of insanity he was being treated."

"Do you mean that Gregory Banks is insane?"

"Sh! Be careful what you say, *mon ami*. Now, listen carefully. There is a good train to Bury St. Edmunds at twelve o'clock. That is the train for you. If I have any more news I will telephone you before you start. Is that understood? *Bien!* And now—for the moment—goodbye."

Poirot heard the sound of the receiver being replaced at the other end, then he heard a very faint second click—and smiled to himself. Somebody had replaced the receiver on the telephone in the hall. He went out there. There was no one about. He tiptoed to the cupboard behind the stairs and looked inside. It was empty.

Five minutes later, after leaving the house by the side door, he was walking briskly the quarter-mile to the post office, where he demanded a trunk call. Presently he was once more speaking to Mr. Entwhistle.

"Yes, it is I, yet again! Pay no attention to the commission with which I entrusted you. *C'était une blague!* Someone was listening. Now, *mon vieux*, to the real commission. You must, as I said, take a train. But *not* to Bury St. Edmunds. I want you to proceed to the house of Mr. Timothy Abernethie."

"But Timothy and Maude are at Enderby."

"Exactly. There is no one in the house but a woman by the name of Jones, who is looking after the place. What I want you to do is to take something out of that house!"

"My dear Poirot! I really can't stoop to burglary!"

"It will not seem like burglary. You will say to the excellent Mrs. Jones that you have been asked by Mr. or Mrs. Abernethie to fetch this particular object and take it to London. She will not suspect anything amiss."

In a martyred voice Mr. Entwhistle asked: "And what is this object I've got to get hold of?" Poirot told him. "But really, Poirot, I

PEOPLE IN THE CASE

TIMOTHY ABERNETHIE—younger brother of the dead Richard Abernethie. A blustering old hypochondriac, affronted at not inheriting *all* his brother's money. Childishly dependent on *MAUDE*, his fussily devoted wife—a big, capable, tweedy woman.

HELEN ABERNETHIE—Richard's favourite; his brother Leo's widow. Fiftyish, charming and intelligent.

ROSAMUND SHANE—Richard's lovely, scatterbrained niece. With her vain, ambitious husband, *MICHAEL*, earns a precarious living from the stage.

SUSAN BANKS—Richard's other niece, who inherited his good business sense and strong personality. Married—in spite of family disapproval — to *GREGORY*, a chemist, who was once a patient in a mental home.

GEORGE CROSSFIELD—Richard's racy young nephew, who worked for a shady firm of solicitors, and—Mr. Entwhistle suspected—had been speculating with his clients' money.

CORA LANSQUENET—Richard's youngest sister, found brutally murdered with a hatchet at her country cottage the day after the funeral, by *MISS GILCHRIST*, her genteel, twittery companion-help.

don't see——" But the old lawyer was interrupted.

"It is not necessary for *you* to see. *I* am doing the seeing."

"And what do you want me to do with the damned thing?"

"You will take it to London, to an address in Elm Park Gardens. If you have a pencil, note it down."

Having done so, Mr. Entwhistle said, still in his martyred voice: "I hope you know what you are doing, Poirot?"

He sounded very doubtful—but Poirot's reply was not doubtful at all. "Of course I know what I am doing. We are nearing the end."

Mr. Entwhistle sighed. "If we could only guess what Helen was going to tell me."

"No need to guess. I *know*."

"You know. But, my dear Poirot——"

"Explanations must wait. But let me assure you of this. I know what Helen Abernethie saw when she looked in her mirror."

BREAKFAST had been an uneasy meal. Neither Rosamund nor Timothy had appeared, but the others were there and had talked in rather subdued tones, and eaten a little less than they normally would have done.

"What I can't make out," said Susan, "is what Helen was doing telephoning at that unearthly hour, and who she was telephoning to?"

"Felt ill," said Maude with decision. "Probably woke up feeling queer and came down to ring the doctor. Then had a giddy fit and fell. That's the only thing that makes sense."

"Bad luck hitting her head on that doorstop," said Michael Shane. "If she'd just pitched over on to that thick pile carpet she'd have been all right."

The door opened and Rosamund came in, frowning.

"I can't find those wax flowers," she said. "I mean the ones that were standing on the malachite table the day of Uncle Richard's funeral." She looked accusingly at Susan. "*You* haven't taken them?"

"Of course I haven't! Really, Rosamund——" She broke off as Lanscombe appeared at the door to see if they had finished breakfast.

"We're all through, Lanscombe," said George, getting up. "What's happened to our foreign friend?"

"He is having his coffee and toast served upstairs."

"*Petit déjeuner* for U.N.A.R.C.O.," said Rosamund. She turned to Lanscombe. "Do you know where those wax flowers are that used to be on that green table in the drawing-room?"

"I understand Mrs. Leo had an accident with them, ma'am. She was going to have a new glass shade made, but I don't think she has seen about it yet."

"Then where is the thing?"

"It would probably be in the cupboard behind the staircase, ma'am. That is where things are usually placed when awaiting repair. Shall I ascertain for you?"

"I'll go and look myself. Come with me, Michael sweetie. It's dark there, and I'm not going in any dark corners by myself after what happened to Aunt Helen."

Everybody showed a sharp reaction. Maude demanded in her deep voice: "What *do* you mean, Rosamund?"

"Well, she was coshed by someone, wasn't she?"

Gregory Banks said sharply: "She was taken suddenly faint and fell."

Rosamund laughed. "Did she tell you so? Don't be silly, Greg; of course she was coshed."

George said sharply: "You shouldn't say things like that, Rosamund."

"Nonsense," said Rosamund. "She *must* have been. I mean, it all adds up. A detective in the house looking for clues, and Uncle Richard poisoned, and Aunt Cora killed with a hatchet and Miss Gilchrist given poisoned wedding cake, and now Aunt Helen, struck down with a blunt instrument. You'll see, it will go on like that. One after another of us will be killed and the one that's left will be It—the murderer, I mean. But it's not going to be *me*—who's killed, I mean."

"And why should anyone want to kill you, beautiful Rosamund?" asked George lightly.

Rosamund opened her eyes wide. "Oh," she said, "because I know too much, of course."

"What do you know?" Maude Abernethie and Gregory Banks spoke almost in unison.

Rosamund gave her vacant and angelic smile. "Wouldn't you all like to know?" she said agreeably. "Come on, Michael."

At eleven o'clock, Hercule Poirot called an informal meeting in the library. Everyone was there and Poirot looked thoughtfully round the semi-circle of faces.

"Last night," he said, "Mrs. Shane announced to you that I was a private detective. For myself, I hoped to retain my—camouflage, shall we say?—a little longer. But no matter! Today—or at most the day after—I would have told you the truth. Please listen carefully now to what I have to say."

He cleared his throat and gazed commandingly round the room.

"I have been a friend for many years of Mr. Entwhistle's——"

"So he's the nigger in the wood pile!"

"If you like to put it that way, Mr. Crossfield. As I say, Mr. Entwhistle and I are friends. It was he who commissioned me to make the necessary investigations into the death of Richard Abernethie."

There was a pause.

"I have made them. . . ." Again there was a pause. No one spoke. Poirot threw back his head. "*Eh bien*, you will be delighted to hear that as a result of my investigations there is absolutely no reason to believe that Mr. Abernethie died anything but a natural death. There is no reason *at all* to believe that he was murdered!" He smiled. He threw out his hands in a triumphant gesture. "That is good news, is it not?"

It hardly seemed to be, by the way they took it. They stared at him and in the eyes of all but one person there still seemed to be doubt and suspicion.

The exception was Timothy Abernethie, who was nodding his head in violent agreement.

"Of course Richard wasn't murdered," he said angrily. "I'm glad you've had the sense to come to the right conclusion, Mr. whatever-your-name-is, though, if you ask me, I call it damned cheek of Entwhistle to go commissioning you to come prying and poking about. And if he thinks he's going to charge the estate with your fee, I can tell you he won't get away with it! Damned cheek, and most uncalled for! Who's Entwhistle to set himself up? If the family's satisfied——"

"But the family wasn't, Uncle Timothy," said Rosamund.

"Hey—what's that?" Timothy peered at her under beetling brows of displeasure.

A family row was starting up again, and under cover of it, M. Poirot slipped out.

HERCULE POIROT was sitting in the Victorian summer-house. He drew his large watch from his pocket and laid it on the table in front of him.

He had murmured before leaving the room that he was leaving by the twelve o'clock train. There was still half an hour to go.

Half an hour for someone to make up his mind and come to him. Perhaps more than one person. . . .

It was Miss Gilchrist who came first. She was flustered and upset and rather incoherent.

"Oh, Mr. Pontarlier—I can't remember your other name," she said. "I had to come and speak to you, although I *don't* like doing it—but I feel I *ought* to. I mean, after what happened to poor Mrs. Leo this morning—and I cannot think myself that it was a stroke because my own father had a stroke and it was quite different in appearance, and anyway the doctor *said* concussion quite clearly." She paused, took a breath and looked at Poirot with appealing eyes.

"Yes," said Poirot gently and encouragingly. "You want to tell me something?"

"As I say, I don't like doing it—because she's been so kind. She found me the position with Mrs. Timothy and everything."

"You are referring," said Poirot gently, "to Mrs. Banks?"

"Yes, you see—" Miss Gilchrist looked

Continued on page 22

The Maras Affair

Next week, JOHN BULL **begins publication of a brilliant and fast-moving new serial. It is called *The Maras Affair*, and it is the third novel by Eliot Reed—a pseudonym masking the names of two famous authors.**

Eighteen months ago. JOHN BULL **serialized *Tender To Moonlight* by Eliot Reed—and many readers made guesses at the authors' identity. Some were right; but** JOHN BULL **could not tell them so. For the authors had signed an agreement not to reveal their real names, and** JOHN BULL **had to keep the secret.**

Both authors **have made their names by their books—but one of them is also a world-famous "name" in the film industry, and the other writes plays for the stage and television.**

In "The Maras Affair" **they have created a story of great pace and suspense. It is about a foreign correspondent in an Iron Curtain country who stumbles, almost by accident, on the biggest story of his life . . . and of Anna Maras, the girl who is at the heart of it.**

The serial is short**—there are only four parts—and it crackles with excitement from the start. The first long instalment, illustrated in full colour by George Ditton, begins . . .**

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

FORGOTTEN PEOPLE (3) *by Alfred Vogel*

Our jungle trek to the land of dwarfs

The trail led through wild, exotic country where there are flowers that eat insects and trees that walk. Then across a roaring river lay a frail bamboo bridge—the sole link with the unknown world of pygmy warriors that we had come to find

Alfred Vogel—who is five feet six inches—poses with a New Guinea pygmy warrior and his wife

KAROP WAS A TYPICAL fortified mountain village, but only some of the villagers lived within the palisade; the others had their huts scattered throughout the surrounding country, and it was only in time of strife that they withdrew to the village for their common defence. The huts lay in a semicircle round the village "square." One of them, larger and better than the others, was the guesthouse, and there we took up our quarters at the end of the first stage of our expedition.

After the ceremonial greeting we were offered water out of thick bamboo pipes about six feet long. The boys of the village were the water-carriers—a far from enviable job, for all water had to be fetched in these pipes from a stream in the valley far below. Politeness and our own thirst demanded that we drank, but caution suggested the application of our handkerchiefs over the bamboo rim to act as a filter, for there was no knowing when one of the spectators, whose faces were covered with tropical sores, had last slaked his thirst. The idea that the village should have served as a fortress seemed ridiculous in view of the fact that its water had to be fetched from so far away, but on further consideration I remembered that the Papuans never go out at night. Battles and assaults on villages are always daylight affairs, and members of a besieging force will never spend the night in temporary camps in the jungle round a village they are besieging.

Club Life—For Men Only

Papuans' huts are most primitive; in fact, they are little more than heated sleeping places. In the morning, after a meal of sweet potatoes and vegetables, the women and children go to the clearing and spend the entire day working on their plots, bringing back a day's supply of vegetables when they return in the evening. The men usually sit in a wide ring in the village square and lead a sort of club life, except when urgent business such as hunting or tree-felling interrupts the pleasure of existence. While they talk they make weapons or fishing tackle.

The hot main meal of the day is prepared in cooking trenches in the evening after the women have brought home the ingredients. Till then, the men are content to eat the cold left-overs of sweet potato which they carry about with them in a little bag. They also refresh themselves with pieces of sugar-cane. On hunting expeditions they often carry a sugar-cane over their shoulder with their spear or bow. Every now and then they cut off a piece; they do not need, as do we effeminate whites, to pare away the wooden-hard fibre envelope with a knife; they do the paring with their teeth, lapping up the cool, tasty, and energizing sap. The process is a combination of natural toothbrushing and excellent gum massage, and that, plus the uniformity of their diet, is perhaps the explanation of their sound, dazzling white teeth.

In Papuan communities the women perform

Pygmies cross their suspension bridge spanning the Jimmi River. It is made of bamboo and is supported by plaited lianas fastened to trees

Vogel (left) and Ned Blood inspect a walking tree. The trunk, not shown, is held by a score of stilt-like roots. As they die and new roots grow, the tree "walks" several yards in the course of years

three onerous rôles—agricultural worker, wife and mother, and beast of burden; the men are merely warriors and drones. It is a grotesque sight to see a household on the move. First, in splendid isolation, comes the father, carrying nothing but a few light weapons, striding along with elastic step in all his gorgeous trappings, his swinging tailpiece enhancing the cock-like effect. Behind him trudge his wives, dirty and unadorned, drooping under gigantic loads. Children not big enough to walk are often perched on top of the loads. Sometimes the women carry one of the dogs that, after decades of bartering, have arrived from the coast. These dogs have the least possible amount of exercise, so that there may be plenty on them when the time comes for them to enliven some family festivity.

Saving Up To Buy A Bride

Many of these village communities conduct a sort of welfare service, the family of a fallen warrior being given a number of pigs from the village's communal herd. Their means test is, however, the opposite of ours, for the more important and rich the man was, the more pigs are given to his sorrowing family. To the savage mind this is eminently logical.

In the huts of the more wealthy it is possible to see a "strong box" consisting of shells and folded pieces of cloth—so-called lapp-lapp. No one, of course, would be mad enough to use lapp-lapp for its original purpose; it is treated like a banknote. If a poor youth is saving up to buy a bride, but has not yet got enough to satisfy the avarice of his future father-in-law, he will sometimes be helped by the family Croesus with a loan of one or two pieces of cloth. The loan is repaid little by little—which is a good way of putting it, for time here is certainly not money, and interest is unknown—in such a way that the young husband eventually returns the identical lapp-lapp to the lender.

First, however, he must pay to his father-in-law the vegetables (grown by the wife he has acquired) or the animals (sucking pigs reared by his wife) of which he was short when the purchase was originally made; and, that done, the father-in-law relinquishes the lapp-lapp security given him by his son-in-law, who can then repay the family Croesus. Should the wife have run away from her spouse while working on the family clearing or simply have been unfaithful to him, repayment is hastened by fines imposed on the father-in-law. That, no doubt, explains the severity of the punishment inflicted in such cases on their ungrateful daughters by outraged fathers.

The Corpse Under The Roof

Excellent care is taken of the old people of a village, whether men or women. The younger generations of a family consider it a point of honour to see that their aged relatives are well looked after. All the old people I met seemed to lead a calm and carefree existence, and also to be treated with respect by the younger ones.

When someone in a household dies, the body is not buried until the entire family has been informed of the death and has had time to assemble. It may be a matter of weeks, during which the body has to be preserved. Often the corpse is hoisted up under the roof of the hut, where the smoke hangs thick. The family seem in no way disturbed by the presence of their departed relative, even when having their meals. The effect of the heat and other factors I shall pass over in silence.

When the family has eventually assembled, the funeral takes place, the ceremony differing considerably from district to district. One common custom, however, is that close relatives, as

Papuan porters build a hut on the Jimmi River camp site. On the right, two-year-old Susanne

the supreme expression of grief, cut off the top of a finger, which accompanies the dead person into the grave. That is why one often sees older men and women with several mutilated fingers.

A burial is always an occasion for a great pig-eating in honour of the dead person's memory. In some parts, they eat part of the dead person's body—usually the heart and liver—no matter what disease he died of. And yet epidemics are rare. Evidently Nature inoculates those who reach maturity against the more usual diseases. The only remedies the natives use are leaves which, they assert, have healing properties and are laid on wounds, and cupping, to which they resort for feverish disorders and headache. They open a vein and suck blood from the patient through a kind of tube. The larvae of flies filling a wound are allowed to remain there under the leaf bandage.

Medical reports from the Korean war front have suggested that the native practice is a sound one, for evidently the larvae of flies accelerate the healing of a wound by eating up only the diseased and infected tissues.

Heard Roar Of Waterfall

From Karop, if the light was good, a small brown patch on the green of a mountain crest some distance away could be seen. This was the village of Meguagi, which was the next stage on our journey towards the pygmy country. For the first few hours our way led us down until we reached a terrace where the ground fell sheer into a ravine, 1,600 feet deep. The silvery band of a river gleamed here and there through the tree-tops, and the roar of a waterfall came echoing out of the canyon-like valley floor. The path, which had obviously carried a torrent during

Blood, the expedition leader's daughter, plays with boys from a nearby village

Armed pygmies bring a pig to the Jimmi River camp to barter for shells and salt. The headdresses of the warriors on the left are from the cassowary bird, which is hunted and caged for its highly prized feathers

the rain of the previous night, was as slippery as soap.

I began the descent cautiously, moving one step at a time and holding the hand of my boy, Kaibal; then, in order to avoid playing rear-guard again, I flung all consideration for the white man's prestige to the winds and tobogganed down the worst places on my backside. When the view broadened out we could see white cockatoos and other birds, alarmed by the head of the column, circling with loud squawks and cries over the valley. Some of the spare porters proudly stopped to show me the eggs of bush-turkeys they had found. They were larger than goose eggs and of a greyish-white colour.

Catch Of Rare Butterflies

We bathed in the river before lunch. Upstream we saw a few good-sized waterfalls, their white foam crowned with a small rainbow. At the place where we halted, the river was divided by several barriers—giant rounded boulders, between which the water surged at tremendous speed, crystal clear and beautifully cold. Now and then mountain ducks would fly over, mostly in pairs.

We made a long halt at the river, for along its banks flew innumerable butterflies of the loveliest colours, some of them very large. A few of the boys had nets, and they caught a number of rare specimens for Blood. Every evening, as we sat in the mosquito-net tent, he attended to the day's catch of butterflies, and I to the beetles which I was collecting for the Swedish National Museum.

The *luluai* (chief) of Meguagi arrived after we had finished lunch. He was accompanied by several other chiefs and warriors, all dressed for war and wearing their headdresses of cassowary feathers. This mighty potentate had once visited Nondugl and knew Blood. Tall and handsome, his full beard and clear-cut aristocratic profile making him resemble the Assyrian kings pictured in schoolbooks, he was a very intelligent and, to us, a very friendly man. He accompanied us for several weeks and did us great service, for he was held in high esteem throughout the area lying between us and the Jimmi River. He and I got on well together and when, some days later, I presented him with two studs with blue enamel backs to put in the lobes of his ears, and a cuff link made out of a uniform-button with which to ornament his nose, I felt that I had made a friend for life. These savages never say thank you—the word "thank" does not exist in their language—but as soon as they can they will do something in return.

As I was really tired—I had got a touch of dysentery—the chief offered to have me carried up the steep slopes to his village. In less than a quarter of an hour his men had made me an excellent litter, consisting of a frame of branches on two long carrying-poles and provided with arm-rests, all lashed together with lianas.

Hid His Fear Behind Smiles

In the afternoon six singing and happily shouting under-chiefs carried me up the steep mountain side to Meguagi, itself a fortified highland village. It was amazing to watch the phenomenal skill and ease with which those men manhandled my fourteen stone weight up slopes that in places were nearly vertical. Never before have I had to hide my fear behind so many smiles as on the steeps, where my bearers often carried me at an angle of forty-five degrees.

When at length the expedition reached the village, and marched on to the village square to the usual loud joyful cries of "*hoaaa, hoaaa, hoaaa, hoaaa,*" my arms felt quite numb and powerless, for I had been gripping the liana support convulsively. In Meguagi even the usually shy women and children were out in force, lined up on their own, and they welcomed us with a deafening screech and about three hundred pairs of waving arms. My numbed arms soon came to life during the usual hand-shaking ceremony, when all the men repeatedly shook hands with all of us.

Bird With A Horse's Kick

It was at Meguagi that I first saw a cassowary, a large ostrich-like bird that cannot fly, but runs incredibly swiftly and, when wounded, can kick like a horse at its pursuers. The first I saw were young ones, six or eight inches tall, with dark edges to their greyish-yellow down, wandering round the rubbish heaps in the village.

The village also had its *kasuawari,* cages made of branches, in which were kept full-grown birds doomed to a life of suffering and cruel torture, wretched victims on the altar of vanity. They stood upright, each in a partition so narrow that it could scarcely lie down. The bottom of the cage was eighteen inches above the ground and consisted of split branches which years of wear had made slippery. The poor brutes, unable to move about, trample incessantly with their feet and are constantly slipping. Their misshapen, elongated claws are a horrible sight.

What was the purpose of it? The cassowary's feathers make the finest headdresses for chiefs and warriors. Year after year—according to

Continued on page 29

A place for Joe

by CHARLES FISHER

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES WOOD

For years he'd been a soccer star; and now he was in eclipse. His wife, his son, everyone knew it—everyone but he himself

AT HALF-TIME I WAS STILL in two minds. As in most reserve games, play had swung backwards and forwards with plenty of enthusiasm but not quite enough skill, and though the Dragons had a comfortable two-goal lead, I felt that the faithful mid-week few thousand were a mite restive. As though they wanted to see what our newcomer—the "Golden Boy" in the green sweater—could really do.

I couldn't blame them. I wanted to know myself.

I'd kept the deal quiet—especially the fee. Ganpar Athletic must have talked first, because the story "broke" in the late lunch editions. The *Post* wrote it up something like this:

DRAGONS BUY YOUNG GOALKEEPER
Record Fee Hinted

Soccer's "Golden Boy" tag can now be firmly fixed to nineteen-year-old Phil Grant, transferred recently from Third Division Ganpar Athletic to the already star-studded ranks of St. George's United. The fee, undisclosed, is reckoned to be well into five figures and probably a record for this type of player. Phil is to have his first "run out" with the reserves this afternoon, though for their Cup Game next Saturday manager Tim Burgess will doubtless choose to rely on veteran Joe Riley, now reported back in full training after two months on the casualty list. . . .

The *Post* was right. I *would* have chosen to rely on Joe. In ten years he'd never missed a First Team game he'd been fit for. But thirty-seven is quite an age in First Division football, even for a clean-living, tough-hearted 'keeper like Joe. That kick in the head—first game of the season—would have finished a lot of fellows.

No, it wasn't courage or "guts" that had gone wrong with Joe. It was his speed of reaction and timing. Ben Whitney, our trainer, had put me on to it a week after Joe had passed his last fitness test.

"Boss," Ben had said, worried, "just have a look through the window, will you?"

I looked. The boys were out there in track suits, running, skipping and medicine-balling. Some of the forwards were taking pot-shots at Joe in goal. He had his track suit off, and I looked down on his giant frame in its green jersey, topped by the famous black shock of hair faintly thinning at the crown. He seemed as solid as ever.

And then, McLugie, our outside-right, put in a medium-fast ball, acutely angled and barely an inch above the turf. Joe saw it but made his dive just a fraction too late and the ball rasped off his fingers into the net.

Now, when Joe takes off his track suit he's really trying. So I kept watching. Two minutes later the same thing happened from the other wing. Later on, Joe jumped too soon for a high curving shot and only just managed to flip it over the crossbar.

I'D had enough. I felt as though someone had just told me the Bank of England had crashed. I said to Ben: "What the heck's the matter with Joe?"

Ben shrugged. "What do *you* think, Boss? It's got me worried. He's been like that since he got back in training. *Anno domini*, I suppose —helped by that kick in the head."

I sat down at my desk. I had to adjust things in my mind. Joe Riley—getting old. Joe—ex-international, slipping down into the reserves. And then, perhaps, the greasy-pole of the transfer market, ending up with a non-League club. A has-been.

"Not Joe," I said, trying to laugh it off. "You must be mistaken. It's—just that he's out of match-practice. In a couple of weeks' time. . . ."

"He'll be just as slow, Chief," Ben interrupted with clipped, unemotional tones. "Believe me, Tim, I *know*."

I started to argue but I caught the look in his eyes. It hurt him as much, perhaps more, than me.

"It's—finish then in First Division, for Joe?"

"Yes."

I'd have seized on the slightest hesitation in his reply as a reprieve for Joe. An excuse not to have to make a report to the board of directors. But the blunt "yes" gave me no room.

We began considering who was going to replace Joe. We had nobody in his class, nobody remotely in his class.

Ben rubbed his lean cheek. "How about that Third South youngster, Grant? You remember —the lad Charlie was so taken up with?"

Charlie Winters was our chief scout. I got out his file of reports and nodded to Ben. "I'll get Charlie to take another look at the lad. If he still O.K.'s him—and Ganpar Athletic will part —we'll sign him, whatever they ask."

Ben was turning over the pages of the report. He whistled enthusiastically. "The boy certainly looks good. With Joe to help. . . ."

"Don't bank on that," I said, clipping a cigar. "Joe can be a queer cuss sometimes. He may decide to get out."

"Get out! But I've promised myself for

The boy looked up from the picture. "Gosh, Dad, isn't he terrific! 'Course, he isn't in the same class as you used to be." Cora stood still, holding her breath, wondering how Joe would take it

The ball came scudding in fast, close to the turf. Joe dived headlong, fingers reaching out for it. He was just a fraction of a second too late

years that Joe should become my top assistant. There'll always be a place for him at Dragon Park! I know the board will back me up. . . ."

I told him not to get so pugnacious about it. I'd back him too, come to that. But I'd have to report first.

As things turned out, the board gave me a free hand in the matter. Joe could stay on at good money for as long as he liked. And in any case there'd be a benefit match for him later in the season.

But I baulked at talking things over with Joe. Every time I saw him the words stuck in my throat and I began to feel more and more like a man who has to shoot his horse because of a broken leg, or sentence a dog that was going blind.

CHARLIE'S report came in with a four-star recommendation, yet I dawdled about it until Ben reminded me there wasn't much time.

So I negotiated, as quietly as possible. I let Joe back into the reserves—as he thought, for a "warming up." He—and all the players—knew there was a transfer deal in the air, but none of them knew it was for a goalkeeper. When the kid had actually arrived, and the story was all round the changing room, Ben called me up on the house phone and said that Joe didn't seem particularly worried. Had I spoken to him yet?

I snapped back that I hadn't—and didn't intend to until after the mid-week game. And that if the boy didn't come a hundred per cent up to Charlie's recommendation I was going to damn everybody and play Joe in the Cup game. . . .

And here I was at half time in the mid-week game, still undecided. The kid had not had much to do, yet I liked the clean way he handled and his decisive clearing. Stuff Joe could still do on his head, of course.

The second half was barely ten minutes old when Big Bill Hudson, the centre-half, was carried off on a stretcher. This weakened the Dragons' defence and the pressure of attack became thick and heavy.

THE youngster didn't put a foot or a hand wrong. I knew long before the final whistle that I was watching a future England international between those white posts.

I phoned Ben after the game and told him the Cup team. The kid had to be in, and Joe out. Would he send Joe up to me? But Joe had gone home.

I didn't sleep very well that night. . . .

Next morning, I'd barely taken off my hat and coat when he came up to my office in his brown track suit, his angular bulk nearly filling the doorway as I told him to come in. From the look on his lean, blue-chinned face, I knew I wasn't going to be able to stall much longer. His voice was nervously hoarse as he came to the point straight away.

"I hear I'm—not in the Cup team, Mr. Burgess," he said. "Why?"

I asked him to sit down. Lit a cigar to fortify my nerves. All I had to say was *"Sorry, Joe. We had to buy that youngster because. . . ."* But the words still stuck in my throat.

I gave him some flannel about needing more match-practice; a game or two more with the reserves.

He cut me short. "That's not true, Mr. Burgess, and you know it. I'm as fit now as ever I was, or will be again." His lips twitched. "Why don't you tell me the truth?"

"Look, Joe—" I spread my hands. "We——"

"I'm too old for the Dragons—is that it? Is Grant taking my place with the first team for keeps?"

His great hands were clenching and unclenching at his sides. I swallowed. "Joe—son. Don't take it like that. The Dragons are big enough for you and young Grant. You know as well as I do we've got to have replacements. Anything can happen——"

"I know the club's rich, Mr. Burgess," Joe interrupted. "But as long as I can remember you never carried more than five 'keepers on your books. Now you've got six—which means one of them's written off, u/s. And that one can only be me."

It was true enough, but I reminded Joe in as friendly a manner as I could that the number of players we carried was my business—and the directors'. He answered that he was making it his business, too, and would I please put him on transfer. As soon as possible.

"Now, Joe——"

I got up and tried to argue with him. I told him about the benefit. About the job with Ben. That there'd always be a place for him at Dragon Park. . . .

He thanked me for the offers, but he didn't need charity. Neither did he want to play week after week with the "stiffs"—the boys and old-timers. He was good First Division for years yet. . . .

I sighed. "What d'you take me for, Joe—a fool?" I was trying to work out whether he

Continued on page 27

Greatest gambler in the disc business

by DON EVERITT

Highbrows or crooners—Oscar Preuss handles them all in his search for the fickle ingredients of a hit recording

A FAMOUS OPERA COMPANY was recording *Tosca*, and nothing was going right. The soprano had collapsed once, the solo 'cellist had played a flat note in the *obbligato*, and not one side of a record had been perfect first time. Twenty attempts had been needed for one difficult passage. Then, amid the fraying tempers, the soprano forgot an entrance. In despair, the conductor let out a yell, threw his score on the floor, and broke his baton.

As on every other taut occasion, one man present—the artists' manager—kept outwardly calm. Smoothing the ruffled temperaments, he persuaded the maestro and the principals to carry on. Eventually, he was rewarded with the opera recorded to his satisfaction. "These particular sessions were exceptional," says Oscar Preuss, "but they do show the trouble-shooting a manager may have to do."

Genial, smooth-voiced, and well-built for his sixty-odd years, Preuss is senior artists' manager for E.M.I., the biggest group of gramophone recording companies in Britain. He is one of a handful of men who virtually control the fortunes of the breakneck "disc" business, a business which has a turnover of £8 million a year in Britain from selling 30,000,000 records.

It is Preuss's job to pick the music that will sell on records, to pick the arrangement that will lift it out of the ordinary, to pick the artist who will give the best rendering, and then to supervise the transference of these fickle ingredients first on to a high-fidelity recording tape and finally on to a master record. Preuss sums up: "I make a living gambling on music."

Success Out Of A Flop

He recalls, as an example, the occasion when Charles Williams asked if he would hear the music he had composed for the film *While I Live*. "It was a very nice piece of light orchestral music. Though I normally wait until the film is out, I decided to record it straight away." When the film was trade-shown, however, he had reason to regret his gamble. "Films have come to have a big influence on record sales," he explains, "and this one was the worst I had seen for a long time. I could imagine the records on the shop shelves for evermore. Charles and I came out of that cinema with our tails really between our legs.

"I joked to cheer him up. 'When the record sells 100,000,' I said, 'I'll buy you a lunch.' Well, we've had that lunch. After it Charles said, 'When the record sells 200,000, I'll buy *you* a lunch.' We've had that lunch, too. So far, the record has sold a quarter of a million, and it's still selling. On the strength of its success, the film has been re-issued under the title of the music, and I understand the sheet music sales have been breaking records, too. Its title—*The Dream Of Olwen*."

The job of artists' manager calls for a musical superman. Preuss handles ("counting orchestras as individuals") fifty to sixty performers. "They seem like thousands," he says. His musical appreciation and knowledge of public tastes are necessarily complete, for his string of artists ranges from the "long-hairs" (the London Baroque Ensemble, for example) to the "pops" (the big-selling popular crooners and orchestras). Between these poles is a mixture containing jazz, light music, square dances, old-time music, marches and almost every other kind of musical ("sometimes even this definition is doubtful") composition.

One of three managers producing British records at E.M.I's St. John's Wood studios, Preuss, who began his forty-nine years in the recording business on the engineering side, says that the bulk of their labours are with the pops. "We have to have the appetite of a glutton for them," he says, "and the selectivity of a gourmet." They listen to every new piece that the publishers put out in the hope of hearing a tune which, coupled with one of their artists, will make a smash hit. "Less than once in thirty records does it happen," says Preuss.

He Had To Work Fast

Normally, Preuss and the other two managers each have to produce twelve to fifteen discs a month. When the occasion demands, however, they also turn out "specials" at short notice. A few weeks ago, a contact at the B.B.C. called Preuss to tell him that a piano theme played in the last three episodes of *Flint Of The Flying Squad* had brought a phenomenal flood of requests for the title and the name of the composer. "Let's hear it, then," said Preuss.

"Trouble is," the B.B.C. man said, "there are only twelve bars to it."

Preuss, overcoming his surprise, heard the theme, got the composer to develop it into a complete score and, ten days after he had received it, he had the record—The Theme From The Last Rhapsody, by Reynell Wreford—in the shops.

The fundamental difference between recording classical and popular music, according to Preuss, is that "with the classics you usually have a standard to go by—say an existing Toscanini or a Stokowski record—but with the pops you've only your own judgment." Top-line classical performers are very pernickety about their records. Any flaws in a recording, unlike those an artist might make on the radio or the stage, are permanent. "It's no use finding them when the records are in the shops."

Velvet-voiced singer Eve Boswell makes a record.

The demand for perfection, Preuss says, puts a severe strain on everyone in the studio. "The violinist Jascha Heifetz thinks the American studios are second-rate, and about once a year he comes over here to do his recording. He is like a machine. If anything goes wrong, it's never his fault. It's either the accompaniment or the engineers. Everyone knows this, and it's inclined to set them on edge. I've known Heifetz sit at a piano and show a first-rate pianist just how he wanted a piece played."

Toscanini once walked into the studio, played twenty bars with the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, and then stopped. "I do not like the placings of the instruments and the acoustics," he said—and he walked out. Not long ago, Sir Thomas Beecham, with an orchestra of ninety and a chorus of two hundred, recorded the lengthy "Mass Of Life," by Delius, three times before he was satisfied. The fruitless efforts cost about £1,000. Even in the air-conditioned, acoustically treated studios—one of which is the largest in the world—one great violinist found fault with the humidity. For half an hour he fretted over a faulty intonation and fidgeted with the strings and bridge adjustment of his violin, until he had everyone almost exhausted before the recording began.

To get a high standard with a pop, the artists' manager is no less critical. In fact, at a recent session one of Preuss's fellow-managers, a sober-faced, compactly built ex-song plugger named Wally Ridley, was so demanding that the patient technicians humorously nicknamed him "Sir Thomas Ridley." At that time, Ridley was

Preuss (left) listens attentively. "You have to be a glutton and a gourmet," he says

The playback. For Preuss (centre) it's a thirty-to-one chance

recording a newcomer, Frankie Vaughan, for whom he has high hopes. His work on this session illustrated the scope of the manager's job.

For three hours the previous day he had rehearsed the two numbers with the singer and orchestra. On the morning before the afternoon session, the recording engineer brought him a problem. Pessimistically, he said the equipment would not take the big variations in the volume of Vaughan's voice. Ridley, unperturbed, discussed the technical limitations of alternative microphones, and then solved the difficulty by having Vaughan partially screened from the microphone to cut the volume.

Typists As An Audience

To get the best from their artists, Oscar Preuss and his colleagues have to pander to their idiosyncrasies. Once, a concert pianist who was unhappy playing to an empty studio was provided with an audience of twelve typists. For those artists who are known to give their best before an audience—Donald Peers, for instance—the managers often take a mobile recording van to the concert or variety hall where they are performing. "Peers learned the business on the stage and there's nothing he does not know about stagecraft," says Preuss. "But he has never been completely happy putting over a song in an unresponsive studio."

Ray Martin, a dapper and talkative Viennese who leads a concert orchestra, is the third manager at E.M.I. He cites Dorothy Squires as a singer with an odd habit. "She likes to take a glass of port or sherry before a session. She thinks it improves her voice. She also likes to sing with her shoes off. For the same reason."

"There are some virtuosos," says Oscar Preuss, "who have never quite got over the idea that to make a recording is to lower their art." He recalls an exchange on this subject between Artur Schnabel, the pianist, and Sir Malcolm Sargent at the beginning of a session. "I feel like Prometheus in chains," Schnabel groaned. "Oh, why do I make myself a slave and play into this machine, the microphone?" Sir Malcolm replied: "You do it for the same reason that I and the orchestra do it." Schnabel asked: "And what is that?" Sir Malcolm replied with one word: "Money."

The disc business, with its close relative, music publishing, has gone through big changes in recent years. "Until the early forties," says Preuss, "the publishers sold their music without much help from the record industry, and we sold the bulk of our records to casual customers. Today, every publisher is out to convince the record manufacturers that his songs are heading for the best-seller lists, and the public's choice of records is largely pre-determined by the films and the disc jockeys."

Once the studio has produced a master record, advance copies are pressed at the factory and sent to the relevant radio programmes, the record columnists and the wholesalers. If the reaction is favourable and if the record has an encouraging background such as a film, Preuss may have ten thousand records pressed in the first edition. "Then we wait and pray," he says. "It may click and become a hit—100,000 copies. It may soar into the rarefied regions of the smash hit—250,000. Or we may be left with half of the first ten thousand unsold."

To show the power of record programmes, Wally Ridley says that if five per cent of Jack Jackson's listeners decided to buy one of the records in his programme, "we couldn't meet the demand." When Teddy Johnson was signed up for some recordings, he was making little progress as a singer. Then both Jackson and Sam Costa featured his first recording, "Beloved, Be Faithful," on their programmes. The result was that Johnson's first two records headed the best-seller lists. "Despite this, Johnson hates his records, and he can't bear to listen to them."

With judicious handling by the artists' manager and with the facilities a studio can offer, records are capable of lifting a performer into star ranking. Vera Lynn made her name on records before she appeared on the stage. Ronnie Ronalde was getting nowhere as a whistler when he recorded a singing-cum-whistling version of "If I Were A Blackbird." It sold 350,000 copies. Records also helped Sir Thomas Beecham to establish the London Philharmonic Orchestra, keeping it going for its first ten years from 1930 to 1940.

Oddest Recording Of All

Oscar Preuss not only records man-made music. With a mobile unit, he has also recorded a vast range of sound effects which are used by radio corporations, theatrical companies and the like all over the world. These effects include numerous bird songs, every kind of vocal reaction from a crowd, every kind of aircraft noise, all types of vehicle from a steam roller to a veteran car, and "cats—male and female."

But the oddest noise the mobile unit has ever recorded, Preuss says, was a woman's voice in a concert hall. The unit was recording a symphony while it was being performed before an audience. Everything went well and the engineers hoped for a perfect recording. They played it back. The music came to a *forte* climax, and then, in the brief, crystal silence which should have followed, a woman in the audience was heard saying: "I saw a lovely camisole for eleven and six." THE END

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THE GOLDMINE IN OUR GARDEN

Continued from page 7

twin and packs eggs down at the Co-op. "There mightn't be more than a few ounces down there."

"That's right," Dad said. "Look on the flaming black side. It's people like you, without any spirit of adventure, that holds this country back."

Just then, Ern O'Reilly, who lives next door, shoved his head over the fence. "What's going on? Who're you burying—the old lady?"

Dad lit a cigarette, casual as they come, and said: "We've just struck gold."

"Yeah?" Ern owns the grocery store and looks like a sack of flour that the kids have drawn a face on. "Our goldfish are spitting up pearls. The bottom of the bath is covered with 'em."

"No, this is fair dinkum," said Dad, and held up a chunk of rock. It winked in his hand, and we could see Ern O'Reilly was impressed at once.

"Cripes! You're right," he said, and suddenly his head disappeared. A minute later we heard him digging away like a ghoul trying to beat the dawn. We listened for a while, then the digging stopped and his head popped back above the fence. "I've struck it, too!"

"Congratulations!" we all said, and felt a bit envious: funny thing, how sour you get when someone comes up with something that, up till then, only you have had.

"Well, I'm going in to get dressed," Shirl said. She's the good-looking one in the family and works in the box office at the local cinema. "I've got to meet Alf at three o'clock."

That reminded me I had a date with Grace. I left the others still yapping round the gold mine, had a wash and got dressed, got out my bike and pedalled over to Grace's. It wasn't far; Bulinga is a pretty small town, on the north coast of New South Wales, surrounded by hills and not much bigger now than when it was founded a hundred years ago.

I looked about the town now as I biked over to Grace's, and thought how it was going to wake up when it found out it was sitting on a gold reef. For all I knew, this might be the last time I'd see Bulinga as a sleepy bush town.

GRACE was waiting for me on the front veranda. "Hallo, Chilla," she said. "You're late."

I kissed her, then sat down beside her on the old wickerwork lounge. "We just discovered gold in the backyard."

She looked at me with the sort of proprietary look that a girl gets towards a man after he's taken her out twice. "Have you been drinking? You had a few too many at the party last night."

"I'm as sober as a judge," I said. "Dad's struck a reef. Ern O'Reilly has, too. Looks like we're going to be rich."

I told her more about the strike, and she moved closer to me on the lounge. Her eyes began to shine. "Now we'll be able to get married."

We'd been trying to get married for the last twelve months, but her old man kept objecting. Blue Dancy hadn't got a cracker: couldn't buy his way out of a sixpenny ransom; but he wanted his daughter to marry someone better than a country schoolteacher.

Skeeter, Grace's young brother, came out, gave me one of those leering winks that only kids and old men can give, and went off down the street. A moment later, Blue Dancy came out on to the veranda.

"Hallo, you here again?" He has a gay, welcoming way with him.

"He's got some wonderful news, Pa," said Grace, and squeezed my hand. "The Phelans have found gold in their backyard."

"Oh yeah?" said her father.

Grace convinced him in the end, and he looked at me with a new light in his eyes. "You think it might be a rich strike?"

"Could be," I said, and examined my nails.

"You and Grace'll be thinking of getting married now, eh?" Subtle as a blunt axe.

"Maybe," I said, still examining my nails.

"Oh, she ain't good enough for you now? You're just like all these other upstarts who get a bit of quick money! Forget your old friends——"

"Get off the boil, Pa," said Grace pleasantly. "Of course we're going to be married. But we'll wait a while to see how rich we're going to be. The whole town may finish up millionaires. Mr. O'Reilly has dug up gold in his backyard, too."

"Is that so?" said her old man, and you could hear his mind changing gears.

When Grace and I left to go for a walk down to the river, I could hear a pick being swung with great haste in the Dancy backyard.

When we were sitting down on the river bank, Grace said: "How do you feel, now you're going to be rich?"

"Well, we don't know that we're going to be rich. We've still got to have the ore assayed. But, even if we are, I don't see that it's going to change us very much. Why should it?"

"Well, you know how money goes to some people's heads." She lay back in the grass and smiled to herself. "I think it might go to my head. And I don't think I'd care."

"I'd tan your hide if it did," I said.

"Would you, Chilla?" she said, turning the smile on me. "Wouldn't you like me to be spoiled?" She put her arms about my neck and pulled my face down to hers. "I really don't want you to spoil me, Chilla. I just wanted to know if you *would*."

And so on, for the next hour or two. It was a pretty good way of spending an hour or two.

BY Monday morning the Bulinga Bonanza was really on. Every backyard from our place to Emu Street had produced gold, and Joe Swanson, the copper, had had to mount a permanent guard so someone wouldn't start digging up the main street. And they might have, too. The reef seemed to stop short somewhere between the east side of Emu Street and the school. The people on the other side of the school had dug up nothing.

When I opened the school it was evident right away that I wasn't going to teach the kids much today. There are thirty kids in the school, boys and girls from six to twelve and, because of the teacher shortage, I have to teach the lot.

It was an easy job to tell which kids came from a gold-producing backyard and which didn't. Those that didn't were spoiling for a fight, and I suddenly realized that the class had become divided into Capitalists and Communists. The kids from the east side were talking about what their fathers were going to buy them—new bikes, dolls. One kid had been promised an outboard motor-boat, even though the river is full of snags and sandbars. The west side kids were muttering that it wasn't fair: the gold belonged to the town and it ought to be shared, no one getting any more than anyone else.

Everybody was talking or arguing but Skeeter Dancy.

"Sick, Skeeter?" I said.

"No," he said casually, and at

"Do you really want it, or do you just want to see if I can find it?"

LIFE WITH FATHER

WHEN I was five my parents took a flat in Dover Street, London, to be near their Bond Street dancing school, and as I did not have a garden to play in, the biggest room of the flat became my playroom.

Here Father and I had some hectic football matches. We made such a racket that one day the woman below complained. "I shall speak very severely to my son about it," promised Father.

"But I could have sworn you were playing, too," the woman said, puzzled.

"I playing?" my father protested indignantly. "Unthinkable!"

Just then I ran out of our flat and shouted down to him: "Come on for our game of football. You be Chelsea and I'll be the Spurs."

I was an only child. Until I went to school I was pretty lonely, as my parents worked hard. But they were young parents, and the very opposite of strict.

When I was at boarding school Father would bring Mother to see me. She was very lovely, and the senior boy I fagged for, thinking she was my sister, fell hopelessly in love. When I told Father, he was highly amused. He kept up the joke; it was remarkable the difference a pretty "sister" made to my comfort.

Being world champions at ballroom dancing, my parents gave exhibitions abroad, and during the holidays I sometimes accompanied them.

Once, in Prague, when Father was paid his £100 exhibition fee in Czech crowns, he was told for the first time that he could not leave the country with more than about £5. He was annoyed, and it was decided to take it out in my shoes. I was thrilled, but on the way to the frontier we got lost, and found we were in Germany.

Trouble began when we tried to get out of Germany; officially we had not entered it. Both parents were searched, but I, pretending to be asleep, was not touched. I was promised ten per cent for a toy electric railway. But in England, the bank official explained that the crowns were worth little outside Czechoslovakia; all he could offer was £25.

Father took the £25, and my hopes were dashed. But next day a parcel arrived. It contained the £10 railway.

When I came out of the army, blinded in one eye and utterly depressed, it was not so much in my father's sympathy as in his character that I found the strength I needed.

At one of our worst periods, with only £16 in the bank, he fell ill and was laid up for eight months. Money was borrowed to tide us over the spot. But he paid it back by writing a

book about ballroom dancing during his convalescence.

I joined Father's firm six years ago, and now act as his business manager. We share the same office, and the arrangement has worked very smoothly. But it was only as his employee that I became aware of what he meant when he insisted that everything had to be up to scratch.

To make the band punctual, he started a "club" to which every late arrival, including himself, paid half a crown for every five minutes late; the collection was shared out equally at Christmas. Dad took great pride in the fact that he had never parted with half a crown in seven years—not until recently, when he was two hours late for a rehearsal. I had entered the time wrongly.

He was furious. Yet, though he had a very good excuse, he fined himself double—£6.

Who are the famous father and son? For their names—and the complete photograph—turn to page 29

once I became suspicious. "Just thinking about the history lesson, sir."

It was strange to find Skeeter Dancy giving any thought to lessons, but all I could do was nod approvingly and move on about the class, cuffing an ear here, cuffing an ear there, thinking how pretty soon I'd be able to give up all this, and the little blighters could grow up in blind ignorance for all I cared.

AT the morning break, Skeeter Dancy went into action. I was sitting in the classroom, correcting some papers, when young Rosie Bendixter, a crawling little brat, came running in with the news that Skeeter was marking off part of the school yard with four sticks and a length of string.

I was outside in a jiff. "What's going on, Skeeter?"

He stood there on his square of earth, arms folded, like one of those carnival boxers who challenges anyone to step in with him, a round or two for a pound or two, and said: "This is the Dancy claim. Me dad's coming down tonight to dig for gold."

I stepped over the string and advanced on him. "Get back into class before I flay the hide off you! I'm boss around here, and no one digs up the school yard without my permission."

Skeeter started to protest, but I clipped his ear and he went grumbling into the classroom.

Late that afternoon, when school had been dismissed and I was in the classroom preparing tomorrow's lessons, Grace came dashing in.

"Dad's ready to shoot you!" she said. "He's tearing his hair out by the handful——"

"He'll look better."

"And he reckons he's going to knock you from here to Sydney!" Then she calmed down and tears came into her eyes. "He says he won't let us get married."

"Well, stone the crows! What's he bellyaching about now? I sent the announcement of our marriage off to the *Shire Sentinel* this morning. How are we going to look if that no-hoper you have for a father steps in and cancels——"

"You haven't got to insult him like that," Grace snapped, and shoved my arms away from her. "After all, he's my father. He may have his faults. . . ."

I laughed hollowly, she slapped my face, and just then Blue Dancy and two other men stepped in the door. "What's up?" he bellowed. "Are you assaulting my daughter? Why, you——"

When he's wild, Blue Dancy has a voice that could stop a train. "Who do you think you are, stopping us from digging in the school yard? If there's gold there, it's first in, first served! It's just like you mugs over on your side of town! You got your cut, and you don't want anyone else to be in on what's going!"

I looked at Grace, thinking she would show more sense, but I might just as well have been looking at the back fence of the iceworks, her reception was that cool. She just turned away from me and stared out the window. That was enough. I was pretty wild myself by this time.

"Get out of here before I massacre the lot of you!" I shouted. "Go on, or, by crikey, I'll have all of you arrested for trespassing!"

Blue Dancy and his two cobbers glared at me for a moment, then he took Grace's arm and they went stamping out of the classroom, and Grace didn't even look at me.

IT went home, and, of course, over on our side of town everything was hustle and bustle. Photographers and reporters had come up from Sydney, and a newsreel truck was parked outside our house. Cameras were set up in the backyard and Dad was standing with one hand on the windlass we'd erected, trying to look casual and at the same time telling the newsreel bloke how to do his job.

"Get a load of Gregory Peck," Dinny said.

I went inside and Mum was mashing potatoes. She looked out the window and nodded her head at Dad. "Never thought I'd marry a film star. Just wait till he starts asking us if we want his autograph."

"Has Dad had the gold assayed yet?" I asked.

"A man arrived up from Sydney this afternoon. He says the ore has enough gold in it to be worth mining. He represents some big company down in the city. He wants to buy all our claims and work them properly."

I looked out at the crowd in our backyard, all the neighbours lining up behind Dad as he posed for the newsreel cameras. There were Ern O'Reilly and his missus, the Sheltons, the Hartneys, the Watsons—all nice people whom I'd known all my life and who already were beginning to look like strangers. There was something on their faces, something I couldn't name, that said they weren't the same people who had been at the party at our place on Saturday night. It was as if their eyes had the glint of gold in them.

"If we sell out to this company, it means we'll all have to move. This street will become just one big mine."

Shirl had come into the kitchen and was setting the table. "Will that matter, if we're rich? We'd want to live in a better place than this one, anyway."

"This one has its points," Mum said. "We've never had any unhappiness in this house."

Which was true. Our family had never had enough money to get us much respect at the bank, but there's no doubt we've been a happy mob.

I sat around home that night, got tired of listening to Dad tell how the cameraman had said he had the makings of a natural character actor, and finally went for a walk. We had reckoned we had dug up about three hundred quids' worth of gold that day, and I couldn't have cared less.

People were still working in their backyard shafts. The houses were silhouetted against the lights that had been rigged up, and everywhere there was the sound of chattering voices, of picks and shovels hitting and scraping the earth, and of the bump and rattle of buckets.

I just kept walking, past the school, and next thing I knew I was standing at the bottom of Grace's street and she was coming down the hill. She saw me only when she was almost on top of me, and pulled up as if I'd suddenly become a precipice.

"Hallo, Grace."

"I don't want to talk to you," she said, and turned round as if about to go up the hill again.

"Look, I'm sorry for what I said about your dad this afternoon. If I went a bit too far, it was only because I'm so much in love with you I can't stand anyone who gets in our way." I moved up closer to her. "Can't we go for a walk and talk it over?"

"What is there to talk over? You don't like Dad, and he doesn't like you. How would I feel, caught between the two of you like that?"

"Let's go for a walk, anyway," I said, and she let me take her arm.

We went down to the river, and I didn't rush it, just let things go their own way. Within half an hour she was kissing me and we were making plans to win her old man over to letting us get married. She said he hadn't mentioned any more about digging up the school yard, but then she almost knocked the wind out of me when she said he was going over tonight to our place to see Dad.

"He's got some scheme to put up to your father," Grace said. "He's heard about this man who's come up from Sydney and wants to take over all the claims for that big gold-mining company."

"Come on," I said, "we're going home! Those two are likely to finish up trading away the whole town!"

When we got to our house there was a daddy of a row going on. We hurried inside and everyone tried to explain at once what it was all about. It was Min who finally shouted them all down. "Dad and Grace's father think people might sell out too cheaply to this Sydney firm who want to work the reef. They think the percentage we've been offered might be too low."

"If that's a really rich lode," Dad chipped in, "we could ask for fifty-fifty."

"If they'd pay it," Mick said.

"They'd pay it, all right," Dad said. "This might be the richest strike since the Ballarat days. What's to stop me from being a gold-mining magnate?"

Mum laughed to herself, and Dad whirled on her. "What's so flaming funny? What are you cackling at?"

"I just thought of a joke," Mum said innocently.

DAD looked at her for a moment, then turned back to the rest of us. "Me and Mr. Dancy want to drive the shaft down farther before we decide whether to sell out."

"But that'll take us a week or more," I said. "When does this bloke want an answer?"

"Tomorrow," said Blue Dancy. "And that's just it! We're going to sink the shaft tonight!"

"How?" I said.

"They're going to use dynamite," Dinny said. "You wouldn't believe it in a book, would you? These two, never handled a stick of dynamite in their lives before, and they're going to blast another eight or ten feet out of the shaft. So they reckon."

I looked at Dad and Blue Dancy. "But to handle dynamite like that takes an expert!"

"Expert, nothing!" said Dad. "Mr. Dancy's read a book on it. A couple of sticks in the right place . . . boom! And in the morning we'll know all about it."

"You said a gobful there," Shirl said.

There wasn't any holding the two

experts. We argued for another five minutes, then things got to the shouting stage again.

There was a brown paper bag on the table that I hadn't noticed. All at once Dad grabbed it, spun on his heels and went darting out the back door, followed by Blue Dancy.

"The damn' fools!" Mum said, and threw away her sewing and got to her feet. "Come on, we've got to stop them!"

We all went out in a rush, but we were too late. Blue Dancy was already down the shaft, with Dad, the bloke who hadn't read the book on dynamiting, standing on the edge of the hole, telling him what to do. If they're looking for someone to handle the traffic on Judgment Day, I'll lay five quid to nothing who'll be in there, telling them how.

Grace clutched my hand. "Oh, stop them, Chilla! They'll kill themselves!"

But it was too late to be a hero, even if I'd wanted to be one, and I don't know that I did.

Blue Dancy suddenly yelled: "The fuse is lit!"

Then he came scrambling up out of the hole, and we all turned and ran. We had just reached the front of the house when the dynamite let go. You never heard such a bang. The sky seemed to fall in, the earth seemed to rise up, all the winds of the world came rushing round the side of the house, we could hear things falling, then there was silence.

We picked ourselves up, counted ourselves, felt for broken bones, then all galloped round to the back of the house again. Back of the house? The kitchen, the wash-house and half of Mick's and Dinny's bedroom were gone. The back and side fences were down, and the yard itself was just a great heap of rubble. Of the shaft there was no sign at all.

We stood there, and even Dad was lost for words. It was Dinny who at last broke the silence. "Well, I'm glad I didn't throw in my job at the abattoirs."

ALL that happened three months ago. Things have settled down again in Bulinga, and it is once more a sleepy bush town. That dynamite did the trick. When the shire council sent in a gang of men to clear up the rubble, it was discovered that the reef no longer existed, at least not under our backyard. Further investigation showed that under the other backyards it also soon petered out. It was just an isolated thin seam, and the man from Sydney lost interest right away. Within six weeks all the backyard shafts were worked out. Some people got two or three hundred quid's worth out of their shafts, and they at least have money in the bank for their trouble. But not the Phelans.

Our place wasn't insured, and it cost us more than we'd got out of the shaft to repair the back of the house. We have a brand-new kitchen, and Mum is as happy as a kangaroo with two pouches.

All the rest of us have settled down, and when we talk about the gold strike now, it's just a joke.

As I said, Bulinga is once more a sleepy bush town. There are no more Capitalists and Communists, and if some of the east side people have more than the west side people, the latter don't mind. The gold strike is now referred to as "our strike," and there's no distinction between who got gold out of it and who didn't.

Grace and I are married. Her old man is a regular visitor, with a sudden interest in education. And I know why. The only place in town where there might *still* be gold is in the school yard. I reckon he's just grooming me to put the bite on me, get me to suggest that the school be moved to another location, then he'll move in and stake his claim on the old school yard.

But I don't fancy his chances. I'm in the box-seat, and I'm staying there. They'll move the school only over my dead body. And, if it kills me, I'm going to stay alive longer than Grace's old man. THE END

"You mean to say you've been going about with that expression on your face since breakfast?"

AFTER THE FUNERAL

Continued from page 12

down, twisting her fingers unhappily.

She looked up and said with a sudden gulp: "You see, *I listened*!"

"You mean you happened to overhear a conversation——"

"No." Miss Gilchrist shook her head with an air of heroic determination. "I'd rather speak the truth. I *did* listen that day—the day that Mr. Richard Abernethie came down to see Mrs. Lansquenet. I was curious, you know, about his turning up suddenly after all those years. And I did wonder—when you haven't much life of your own or very many friends, you do tend to get interested in other people—I mean. . . ."

"Most natural," said Poirot.

"Yes, I do think it was natural. . . . Though not, of course, at all *right*. But I did it! And I heard him. He said something like, 'It's no good talking to Timothy. He pooh-poohs everything. Simply won't listen. But I thought I'd like to get it off my chest to you, Cora. We three are the only ones left. And though you've always liked to play the simpleton you've got a lot of common sense. So what would *you* do about it, if you were me?'

"I couldn't quite hear what Mrs. Lansquenet said," Miss Gilchrist went on, "but I caught the word 'police'—and then Mr. Abernethie burst out quite loud, and said, 'I can't do that. Not when it's a question of *my own niece*.' And then I had to run in the kitchen for something boiling over, and when I got back Mr. Abernethie was saying, 'Even if I die an unnatural death I don't want the police called in, if it can possibly be avoided. You understand that, don't you, my dear girl? But don't worry. Now that I *know*, I shall take all possible precautions.' And he went on, saying he'd made a new will, and that she, Cora, would be quite all right."

Miss Gilchrist stopped.

Poirot said: "I see—I see. . . ."

"But I never wanted to say—to tell. I didn't think Mrs. Lansquenet would have wanted me to. But now—after Mrs. Leo being attacked this morning—and then you saying so calmly that Mr. Abernethie died naturally. . . ."

Poirot smiled. "Thank you, Miss Gilchrist, for coming to me. It was very necessary that you should."

He had a little difficulty in getting rid of Miss Gilchrist, and it was urgent that he should, for he hoped for further confidences.

His instinct was right. Miss Gilchrist had hardly gone before Gregory Banks, striding across the lawn, came impetuously into the summer-house. His face was pale and there were beads of perspiration on his forehead. His eyes were curiously excited.

"At last!" he said. "I thought that stupid woman would never go. You're all wrong in what you said this morning. You're wrong about everything. Richard Abernethie *was* killed. *I* killed him."

Hercule Poirot let his eyes move up and down over the excited young man. He showed no surprise. "So you killed him, did you? How?"

Gregory Banks smiled. "It wasn't difficult for *me*. You can surely realize that. There were fifteen or twenty different drugs I could lay my hands on that would do it. The method of administration took rather more thinking out, but I hit on a very ingenious idea in the end. The beauty of it was that *I* didn't need to be anywhere near at the time."

"Clever," said Poirot.

"Yes." Gregory Banks cast his eyes down modestly. He seemed pleased. "Yes—I *do* think it was ingenious."

POIROT asked with interest: "Why did you kill him?. For the money that would come to your wife?"

"No. No, of course not." Greg was suddenly excitedly indignant. "I'm not a money-grubber. I didn't marry Susan for her *money*!"

"Didn't you, Mr. Banks?"

"That's what *he* thought," Greg said with sudden venom. "Richard Abernethie! He liked Susan, he admired her, he was proud of her as an example of Abernethie blood! But he thought she'd married beneath her—he thought *I* was no good—he despised me! I daresay I hadn't the right accent—I didn't wear my clothes the right way. He was a snob—a filthy snob! So I killed him."

"A most successful murder," said Poirot with grave congratulation. "But why come and give yourself away—to me?"

"Because you said you were through with it all! You said he *hadn't* been murdered. I had to show you that you're not as clever as you think you are—and besides—besides——"

"Yes?" said Poirot. "And besides?"

Greg collapsed suddenly on the bench. His face changed. It took on a sudden ecstatic quality.

"It was wrong, wicked. I must be punished. . . . I must go back to the place of punishment. To atone. . . . Yes, to *atone*! Repentance! Retribution!"

His face was now alight with a kind of glowing ecstasy. Poirot studied him for a moment or two curiously. Then he asked: "How badly do you want to get away from your wife?"

Gregory's face changed. "Susan? Susan is wonderful—wonderful!"

"Yes. Susan is wonderful. That is a grave burden. Susan loves you devotedly. That is a burden, too?"

Gregory sat looking in front of him. Then he said, rather in the manner of a sulky child: "Why couldn't she let me alone?" He sprang up. "She's coming now—across the lawn. I'll go now. But you'll tell her what I told you. Tell her I've gone to the police station. To confess."

Susan came in breathlessly. "Where's Greg? He was here! I saw him."

"Yes." Poirot paused for a moment, before saying: "He came to tell me that it was he who poisoned Richard Abernethie. . . ."

"What absolute *nonsense*! You didn't believe him, I hope. He wasn't even near this place when Uncle Richard died!"

"Perhaps not. Where was he when Cora Lansquenet died?"

"In London. We both were."

Hercule Poirot shook his head.

"No, no, that will not do. You, for instance, took out your car that day and were away all the afternoon. I think I know where you went. You went to Lytchett St. Mary."

"I did no such thing!"

Poirot smiled. "When I met you here, madame, it was not, as I told you, the first time I had seen you. After the inquest on Mrs. Lansquenet you were in the garage of the King's Arms. You talked there to a mechanic and close by you was a car containing an elderly foreign gentleman. You did not notice him, but he noticed you."

"I don't see what you mean. That was the day of the inquest."

"Ah, but remember what that mechanic said to you! He asked you if you were a relative of the victim, and you said you were her niece."

"He was just being a ghoul. They're all ghouls."

"And his next words were: 'Ah, I wondered where I'd seen you before.' Where did he see you before, madame? It must have been in Lytchett St. Mary, since in his mind his seeing you before was accounted for by your being Mrs. Lansquenet's niece. Had he seen you near her cottage? And when?"

SUSAN stared at him. Her breath came rather fast, but she showed no signs of discomposure. "You're talking nonsense, M. Poirot. I've already told you——"

"Yes, madame, you have already told me that Gregory never left London that day—a fact which you cannot possibly know since you were away yourself. Why did you go down to Lytchett St. Mary, Mrs. Banks?"

Susan drew a deep breath. "All right, if you must have it! What Cora said at the funeral worried me. I kept on thinking about it. Finally I decided to run down in the car and see her, and ask her what had put the idea into her mind. I got there about three o'clock, knocked and rang, but there was no answer, so I thought she must be out or gone away, and drove straight back to London. That's all there is to it."

Poirot's face was non-committal. He said: "Why does your husband accuse himself of the crime?"

"Because he's—" a word trembled on Susan's tongue and was rejected.

"You were going to say, 'because he is batty,' speaking in jest—but the jest was too near the truth. He was for some months in Forsdyke House Mental Home before you met him, was he not?"

"He was never certified. He was a voluntary patient."

"That is true. He is not, I agree, to be classed as insane. But he is, very definitely, unbalanced. He has a punishment complex—has had it, I suspect, since infancy."

Susan spoke quickly and eagerly. "He has got to feel he is *someone*—not just a chemist's assistant, being pushed around. Everything will be

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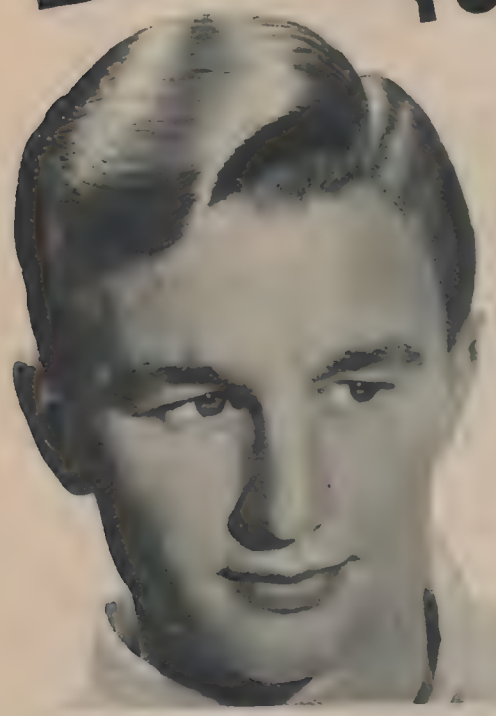

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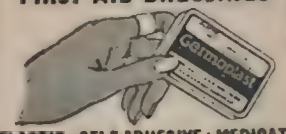

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different now. He will have his own laboratory. He can work out his own formulas."

"Yes, yes, you will give him the earth—because you love him. At the end of it all, he will still be something that he does not want to be. . . ."

"What's that?"

"*Susan's husband.*"

"How cruel you are! And what nonsense you talk!" Angrily, she turned and dashed away.

M. Poirot sat with a little smile on his face. Everything was going satisfactorily. He withdrew the smile as his next visitor appeared.

"I thought," said Michael Shane lightly, "that I'd just come along and say goodbye."

Poirot was aware of the man's vital charm. He studied Michael Shane for some moments in silence. He felt as though he knew this man least well of all the house party, for Michael Shane only showed the side of himself that he wanted to show.

"Your wife," said Poirot conversationally, "is a very unusual woman. She knows what she wants." He sighed. "So few people do."

"Ah!" Michael's smile broke out again. "Thinking of the malachite table?"

"Perhaps." Poirot paused and added: "*And of what was on it.*"

"The wax flowers, you mean?"

"The wax flowers."

Michael frowned. "I don't always quite understand you, M. Poirot. However"—the smile was switched on again—"I'm more thankful than I can say that we're all out of the wood. It's unpleasant, to say the least of it, to go around with the suspicion that somehow or other one of us murdered Uncle Richard. Poor old boy—I'm afraid he never approved of me, you know."

"He thought you, perhaps, the unfaithful type?" Poirot suggested.

Michael laughed. "What an old-fashioned idea!"

"But it is true, isn't it?"

"Now I wonder what you mean by that?"

POIROT placed the tips of his fingers together. "There have been some inquiries made, you know," he murmured. "For instance, the police are interested in the movements of Mrs. Lansquenet's relatives on the day that she was killed."

"That's extremely awkward." Michael spoke with a charming, confidential, rueful air. "I told Rosamund, you see, that I was lunching with a certain Oscar Lewis on that day. Actually, I motored down to see a woman called Sorrel Dainton—quite a well-known actress. I was with her in her last show."

"Yes, I can see that may be awkward. . . . And this Miss Dainton, she will testify for you?"

"She won't like it—but as it's murder, I suppose she'll have to do it."

"She will do it, perhaps, even if you were *not* dallying with her."

"What do you mean?" Michael looked suddenly black as thunder. "Are you saying you don't believe me?"

"It does not matter if *I* believe you or not. It is not *I* you have to satisfy."

"Who, then?"

Poirot smiled. "Inspector Morton, who has just come out on the terrace through the side door."

A few minutes later, M. Poirot and Inspector Morton were pacing the terrace together. "I heard you were here, M. Poirot," said the inspector. "I came over with Superintendent Parwell from Matchfield. Dr. Larraby rang him up about Mrs. Leo Abernethie and he's come over here to make a few inquiries. The doctor wasn't satisfied."

"And you, my friend," inquired Poirot, "where do you come in? You are a long way from your native Berkshire."

"I wanted to ask a few questions—and the people I wanted to ask them of seemed very conveniently assembled here." He paused before adding: "Your doing?"

"Yes, my doing."

"And as a result of that, Mrs. Leo Abernethie gets knocked out. . . ."

"You must not blame me for that. If she had come to *me*. . . . But she did not. Instead, she rang up her lawyer in London."

"And was in the process of spilling the beans to him when—*wonk!* What had she managed to tell him?"

"Very little. She had only got as far as telling him that she was looking at herself in the glass."

"Ah! well," said Inspector Morton philosophically. "Women will do it." He looked sharply at Poirot. "That suggests something to you?"

"Yes, I think I know what it was she was going to tell him. But"—he cut short the inspector's question with a wave of his hand—"I will ask you, my friend, to give me a few more hours. If I am right, then I may be able to place in your hands a piece of concrete evidence."

"We could certainly do with it," said Inspector Morton with feeling. "By the way, we have had one piece of rather curious information—from the Mother Superior of some convent or other. Two of her nuns had been out collecting from door to door. It seems that they went to Mrs. Lansquenet's cottage on the day *before* she was murdered, but couldn't make anyone hear when they knocked and rang. That's natural enough—she was up north at the Abernethie funeral and Gilchrist had been given the day off and had gone on an excursion to Bournemouth. The point is that they say *there was someone in the cottage*. They say they heard sighs and groans. And if they did, who was it? All the Abernethie crowd were at the funeral."

Poirot asked a seemingly irrelevant question: "These nuns who were collecting in that district, did they return at a later date to try again?"

"As a matter of fact, they did come again—about a week later. Actually, on the day of the inquest, I believe."

"That fits," said Hercule Poirot. "That fits very well."

Inspector Morton looked at him. "Why this interest in nuns?"

"They have been forced on my attention whether I will or no. It will not have escaped your attention, Inspector, that the visit of the nuns was on the same day that poisoned wedding cake found its way into the cottage."

"You don't think—surely that's a ridiculous idea?"

"My ideas are never ridiculous," said Hercule Poirot severely. "And now, *mon cher*, I must leave you to your questions and to the inquiries into the attack on Mrs. Abernethie. I myself must go in search of the beautiful Rosamund."

Poirot found Rosamund sitting on a bench overlooking a little stream that cascaded down in a waterfall and then flowed through rhododendron thickets. She was staring into the water.

"I do not, I trust, disturb an Ophelia," said Poirot as he took his seat beside her. "You are, perhaps, studying the rôle?"

"I've never played in Shakespeare," said Rosamund. "Except once in rep. I was Jessica in *The Merchant*. A lousy part. I thought you'd gone," she said

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IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

with a touch of reproach. She glanced down at her wrist-watch. "It's past twelve o'clock."

"I have missed my train," said Poirot. "Do you know, madame, I have been sitting in the little summer-house hoping that you would, perhaps, pay me a visit there?"

Rosamund stared at him. "I had a lot I wanted to think about. Important things. I had to come to a decision."

"About your husband?"

"Yes—in a way. Poor Michael. He thinks I don't really know he went off to be with that woman that day."

"Which day?"

"The day Cora was killed."

"How did you know?"

"It was obvious from the *way* he said he was going to lunch with Oscar. So frightfully casual, you know, and his nose twitching just a tiny bit like it always does when he tells lies."

"He is not, I fear, a very faithful husband?" Poirot hazarded.

"No."

"You are afraid, perhaps, that someone might take him away from you?"

"They won't," said Rosamund. "Not now. With Michael the show will always come first. He can launch out now in a big way—put his own shows on, produce as well as act. No, I'm not worried about Michael any more. Because it's my money, you see."

She turned. Her eyes met Poirot's calmly. He thought how strange it was that both Richard Abernethie's nieces should have fallen deeply in love with men who were incapable of returning that love.

"The point is," said Rosamund, "that I've got to make a big decision—about the future. Michael doesn't know yet." Her face curved into a smile. "He found out that I wasn't shopping that day and he's madly suspicious about Regent's Park."

"What is this about Regent's Park?" Poirot looked puzzled.

"I went there, you see, after Harley Street. Just to walk about and think. Naturally, Michael thinks that if I went there at all, I went to meet some man!" Rosamund smiled beatifically and added: "He didn't like that *at all*!"

Poirot looked at her in silence for a while. He said at last: "I think, madame, that you must cede the green malachite table to your cousin Susan."

Rosamund's eyes opened very wide. "Why should I? I *want* it."

"I know. I know. But you—you will keep your husband. And the poor Susan, she will lose hers."

"Lose him? Do you mean Greg's going off with someone? I wouldn't have believed it of him. He looks so *wet*."

"Infidelity is not the only way of losing a husband, madame."

"You don't mean——?" Rosamund stared at him. "You're not thinking that Greg poisoned Uncle Richard and killed Aunt Cora and conked Aunt Helen on the head? That's ridiculous. Even *I* know better than that."

"Who did, then?"

"George, of course. George is a wrong 'un, you know. He's mixed up in some sort of currency swindle—I heard about it from some friends of mine who were in Monte. I expect Uncle Richard got to know about it and was just going to cut him out of his will."

Rosamund added complacently: "I've always known it was George."

The telegram came about six o'clock that evening. Poirot tore it open with somewhat less than his usual precision. It consisted of three words and a signature. He gave vent to an enormous sigh of relief. Then he took a pound note from his pocket and handed it to the dumbfounded boy.

"There are moments," he said to Lanscombe, "when economy should be abandoned."

"Very possibly, sir," said Lanscombe politely.

"Where is Inspector Morton?" asked Poirot.

"One of the police gentlemen"—Lanscombe spoke with distaste, indicating subtly that such things as names for police officers were impossible to remember—"has left: The other is, I believe, in the study."

"Splendid," said Poirot. "I join him immediately."

He went into the study and without a word handed Inspector Morton the telegram.

Morton read it blankly. "I don't understand a word of this."

"The time has come to tell you all."

Inspector Morton grinned. "You sound like a young lady in a Victorian melodrama. But it's about time you came across with something. I can't hold out on this set-up much longer. That Banks fellow is still insisting that he poisoned Richard Abernethie and boasting that we can't find out how. For the Lord's sake hurry up and do it!"

This time it was in the big drawing-room that Hercule Poirot assembled his audience. There was amusement rather than tension in the faces that were turned towards him. Menace had materialized in the shape of Inspector Morton and Superintendent Parwell. With the police in charge, questioning, asking for statements, Hercule Poirot, private detective, had receded into something closely resembling a joke.

Timothy was not far from voicing the general feeling when he remarked in an audible *sotto voce* to his wife: "Damned little mountebank! Entwhistle must be *gaga*!—that's all I can say!"

It looked as though Hercule Poirot would have to work hard to make his proper effect.

He began in a slightly pompous manner. "For the second time, I announce my departure! This morning I announced it for the twelve o'clock train. This evening I announce it for the nine thirty—immediately, that is, after dinner. I go because there is nothing more here for me to do."

"Could have told him that all along." Timothy's commentary was still in evidence. "Never was anything for him to do. The cheek of these fellows!"

Poirot surveyed his audience. With full dramatic effect he announced: "I came here originally to solve a riddle. The riddle is solved. Let me, first, go over the various points which were brought to my attention by the excellent Mr. Entwhistle.

"First, Mr. Richard Abernethie dies suddenly. Secondly, after his funeral, his sister Cora Lansquenet says, 'He *was* murdered, wasn't he?' Thirdly, Mrs. Lansquenet is killed. The question is, are those three things part of a *sequence*? Let us observe what happens next. Miss Gilchrist, the dead woman's companion, is taken ill after eating a piece of wedding cake which contains arsenic. That, then, is the *next* step in the sequence.

"Now, as I told you this morning, I have come across nothing at all to substantiate the belief that Mr. Abernethie was poisoned. Equally, I may say, I have found nothing to prove conclusively that he was *not* poisoned. But as we proceed, things become easier. Cora Lansquenet undoubtedly asked that sensational question. And undoubtedly, on the following day, she was murdered. Now let us examine the fourth happening.

"The local post van driver is strongly of the belief—though he will not definitely swear to it—that he did not deliver that parcel of wedding cake in the usual way. And if that is so, then the parcel was left by hand. We cannot exclude a 'person unknown,' but we must take particular notice of those people who were actually on the spot and in a position to put the parcel where it was subsequently found. Those were: Miss Gilchrist herself, of course; Susan Banks, who came down that day for the inquest; Mr. Entwhistle—but yes, we must consider Mr. Entwhistle; he was present, remember, when Cora made her disquieting remark—and there were two other people. An old gentleman who represented himself to be a Mr. Guthrie, an art critic, and a nun or nuns who called early that morning to collect a subscription."

He paused a moment, then went on. "Miss Gilchrist did not benefit in any way by Richard Abernethie's death and in only a very minute degree by Mrs. Lansquenet's. Also, she was taken to hospital definitely suffering from arsenical poisoning.

"Susan Banks *did* benefit from Richard Abernethie's death, and in a small degree from Mrs. Lansquenet's—though here her motive must almost certainly have been security. She might have very good reason to believe that Miss Gilchrist had overheard a conversation between Cora Lansquenet and her brother which referred to her, and she might therefore decide that Miss Gilchrist must be eliminated. She herself, remember, refused to partake of the wedding cake and also suggested not calling in a doctor until the morning, when Miss Gilchrist was taken ill in the night.

"Mr. Entwhistle did *not* benefit by either of the deaths—but he had had considerable control over Mr. Abernethie's affairs, and the trust funds, and there might well be some reason why Richard Abernethie should not live too long. But, you will say, if it is Mr. Entwhistle who was concerned, why should he come to *me*? And to that I will answer—it is not the first time that a murderer has been too sure of himself.

"We now come to what I may call the two outsiders. Mr. Guthrie and a nun. If Mr. Guthrie is really Mr. Guthrie the art critic, then that clears him. The same applies to the nun, if she is really a nun.

"And I may say that there seems to be a curious—*motif*, one might call it, of a nun running through this business. A nun comes to the door at Mr. Timothy Abernethie's house and Miss Gilchrist believes it is the same nun she has seen at Lytchett St. Mary. Also, a nun, or nuns, called here the day before Mr. Abernethie died. . . ."

George Crossfield murmured, "Three to one, the nun."

Poirot went on: "So here we have certain pieces of our pattern—the death of Mr. Abernethie, the murder of Cora Lansquenet, the poisoned wedding cake, the '*motif*' of the nun.

"I will add some other features of the case that engaged my attention. The visit of an art critic, a smell of oil paint, a picture postcard of Polflexan harbour, and finally a bouquet of wax flowers standing on that malachite table where a Chinese vase stands now. It was reflecting on these things that led me to the truth—and I am now about to tell you the truth."

He smoothed his moustaches. "The first part of it I told you this morning. Richard Abernethie died suddenly. There would have been no reason at all to suspect foul play—had it not been for the words uttered by his sister Cora at his funeral. *The whole case for the murder of Richard Abernethie rests upon those words.* As a result of them, you all believed that murder had taken place, and you believed it, not really because of the words themselves but because of *the character of Cora Lansquenet herself.* And now I come to the question that I suddenly asked myself: *"How well did you all know Cora Lansquenet?"*

For a moment he was silent, and Susan asked sharply, "What do you mean?"

Poirot went on: "*Not well at all*—that is the answer! The younger generation had never seen her at all, or if so, only when they were very young children. There were, in fact, only three people present that day who actually *knew* Cora. Lanscombe, the butler, who is old and very blind; Mrs. Timothy Abernethie, who had only seen her a few times round about the date of her own wedding, and Mrs. Leo Abernethie, who had known her quite well, but who had not seen her for over twenty years.

"So I said to myself: 'Supposing it was *not* Cora Lansquenet who came to the funeral that day?'"

"Do you mean that Aunt Cora—*wasn't* Aunt Cora?" Susan demanded incredulously. "Do you mean that it wasn't Aunt Cora who was murdered, but someone else?"

"No, no, it was Cora Lansquenet who was murdered. *But it was not Cora Lansquenet* who came the day before to her brother's funeral. The woman who came that day came for one purpose only—to exploit, one may say, the fact that Richard died suddenly. And to create in the minds of his relations the belief that he had been murdered. Which she managed to do most successfully!"

"Nonsense! Why? What was the point of it?" Maude spoke gruffly.

"Why? *To draw attention away from the other murder.* From the murder of Cora Lansquenet herself. For if Cora says that Richard has been murdered and the next day *she herself is killed*, the two deaths are bound to be at least considered as possible cause and effect. But if Cora is murdered and her cottage is broken into, and if the apparent robbery does not convince the police, then they will look—where? Close at home, will they not? Suspicion will fall on the woman who shares the house with her."

Miss Gilchrist protested in a tone that was almost bright: "Oh, come—really—Mr. Pontarlier—you don't suggest I'd commit a murder for an

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amethyst brooch and a few worthless sketches?"

"No," said Poirot. "For a little more than that. There was one of those sketches, Miss Gilchrist, that represented Polflexan harbour and which, as Mrs. Banks was clever enough to realize, had been copied from a picture postcard which showed the old pier still in position. But Mrs. Lansquenet painted always from life. I remembered then that Mr. Entwhistle had mentioned there being *a smell of oil paint* in the cottage when he first got there. You can paint, can't you, Miss Gilchrist? Your father was an artist and you know a good deal about pictures. Supposing that one of the pictures that Cora picked up cheaply at a sale was a valuable picture. Supposing that she herself did not recognize it for what it was, but that you did. You knew she was expecting, very shortly, a visit from an old friend of hers who was a well-known art critic. Then her brother dies suddenly—and a plan leaps into your head. Easy to administer a sedative to her in her early cup of tea that will keep her unconscious for the whole of the day of the funeral, while you yourself are playing her part at Enderby. . . .

"You know Enderby well from listening to her talk about it. She has talked, as people do when they get on in life, a great deal about her childhood days. Easy for you to play the part. None of them suspected you were not Cora. You were wearing her clothes, slightly padded, and since she wore a false front of hair, it was easy for you to assume that. Nobody had seen Cora for twenty years—and in twenty years people change so much that one often hears the remark: 'I would never have known her!' But mannerisms are remembered, and Cora had certain very definite mannerisms, all of which you had practised carefully before the glass.

"And it was there, strangely enough, that you made your first mistake. *You forgot that a mirror image is reversed.* When you saw in the glass the perfect reproduction of Cora's bird-like sidewise tilt of the head, you didn't realize that it was actually the *wrong way round.* You saw, let us say, Cora inclining her head to the *right*—but you forgot that actually your own head was inclined to the *left* to produce that effect *in the glass.*

"That was what puzzled and worried Helen Abernethie at the moment when you made your famous insinuation. Something seemed to her 'wrong.' I realized myself the other night when Rosamund Shane made an unexpected remark what happens on such an occasion. Everybody inevitably looks at the *speaker.* Therefore, when Mrs. Leo felt something was 'wrong,' it must be that something was wrong *with Cora Lansquenet.* The other evening, after talk about mirror images and 'seeing oneself,' I think Mrs. Leo experimented before a looking glass. Her own face is not particularly asymmetrical. She probably thought of Cora, remembered how Cora used to incline her head to the right, did so, and looked in the glass—when, of course, the image seemed to her 'wrong' and she realized, in a flash, just what had been wrong on the day of the funeral.

"She puzzled it out. Either Cora had taken to inclining her head in the opposite direction—most unlikely—or else *Cora had not been Cora.* Neither way seemed to her to make sense. But she determined to tell Mr. Entwhistle of her discovery at once. Someone who was used to getting up early was already about, and followed her down, and, fearful of what revelations she might be able to make, struck her down with a heavy doorstop."

Poirot paused and added: "I may as well tell you now, Miss Gilchrist, that Mrs. Abernethie's concussion is not serious. She will soon be able to tell us her own story."

"I never did anything of the sort," said Miss Gilchrist. "The whole thing is a wicked lie."

"It *was* you that day," said Michael Shane suddenly. He had been studying Miss Gilchrist's face. "I ought to have seen it sooner. I felt in a vague kind of way I had seen you before somewhere—but, of course, one never looks much at. . . ." He stopped.

"No, one doesn't bother to look at a mere companion-help," said Miss Gilchrist. Her voice shook a little. "A drudge, a domestic drudge! But go on, M. Poirot. Go on with this fantastic piece of nonsense!"

"The suggestion of murder thrown out at the funeral was only the first step, of course," said Poirot. "You had more in reserve. At any moment you were prepared to admit to having listened to a conversation between Richard and his sister. What he actually told her, no doubt, was the fact that he had not long to live, and that explains a cryptic phrase in the letter he wrote her after getting home. The nun was another of your suggestions. The nun—or rather nuns—who called at the cottage on the day of the inquest suggested to you a mention of a nun who was 'following you round,' and you used that when you were anxious to hear what Mrs. Timothy was saying to her sister-in-law at Enderby. And also because you wished to accompany her there and find out for yourself just how suspicions were going. Actually, to poison *yourself,* badly but not fatally, with arsenic, is a very old device—and I may say that it served to awaken Inspector Morton's suspicions of you."

"But the picture," said Rosamund. "What kind of a picture was it?"

Poirot slowly unfolded a telegram. "This morning I rang up Mr. Entwhistle, a responsible person, to go to Stansfield Grange and, acting on authority from Mr. Abernethie himself"—Poirot gave a hard stare at Timothy—"to look among the pictures in Miss Gilchrist's room and select the one of Polflexan harbour on the pretext of having it reframed as a surprise for Miss Gilchrist. He was to take it back to London and call upon Mr. Guthrie, whom I had warned by telegram. The hastily painted sketch of Polflexan harbour was removed and the original picture exposed."

He held up the telegram and read: *"Definitely a Vermeer. Guthrie."*

SUDDENLY, with electrifying effect, Miss Gilchrist burst into speech. "I knew it was a Vermeer. I *knew* it! *She* didn't know! Talking about Rembrandts and Italian Primitives and unable to recognize a Vermeer when it was under her nose! Always prating about art—and really knowing nothing about it! She was a thoroughly stupid woman. You don't know how boring it is listening to somebody going on about the same things, hour after hour and day after day. And saying 'Oh yes, Mrs. Lansquenet' and 'Really, Mrs. Lansquenet?' Pretending to be interested. And really bored—bored, *bored.* Nothing to look forward to. . . . And then—a Vermeer! I saw in the

THE HUMAN MACHINE

On trial

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by ROFFE THOMPSON

papers that a Vermeer sold the other day for over ten thousand pounds!"

"You killed her—in that brutal way—for ten thousand pounds?" Susan's voice was incredulous.

"Ten thousand pounds," said Poirot, "would have bought and equipped a magnificent tea shop. . . ."

Miss Gilchrist turned to him. "At least," she said. "You *do* understand. It was the only chance I'd ever get. I *had* to have a capital sum." Her voice vibrated with the force and obsession of her dream. "I was going to call it the Palm Tree. And have little camels as menu holders. I meant to start it in some nice neighbourhood where nice people would come in. I had thought of Rye, or perhaps Chichester. . . ."

It was Inspector Morton who broke the spell. Miss Gilchrist turned to him quite politely. "Oh, certainly," she said. "At once. I don't want to give any trouble, I'm sure. After all, if I can't have The Palm Tree, nothing really seems to matter very much. . . ."

She went out of the room with him and Susan said, her voice still shaken: "I've never imagined—a *ladylike* murderer. It's horrible."

ROSAMUND fixed Poirot with large, reproachful blue eyes. "But I don't understand about the wax flowers," she said. They were at Helen's flat in London. Helen herself was resting on the sofa and Rosamund and Poirot were having tea with her.

"I don't see that *wax flowers* had anything to *do* with it," said Rosamund. "Or the malachite table."

"The malachite table, no. But the wax flowers were Miss Gilchrist's second mistake. She said how nice they looked on the malachite table. And you see, madame, *she* could not have seen them there. Because they had been broken and put away before she arrived with the Timothy Abernethies. So she could only have seen them when she was there as Cora Lansquenet."

"That *was* stupid of her, wasn't it?" said Rosamund.

Poirot shook a forefinger at her. "It shows you, madame, the dangers of *conversation*."

"I shall have to be careful," said Rosamund thoughtfully. Then she brightened up. "Did you know? I'm going to have a baby."

"Aha! So that is the meaning of Harley Street and Regent's Park?"

"Yes. I was so upset, you know, and so surprised, that I just had to go somewhere and *think*. I had to decide about the future. And I've decided to leave the stage and just be a mother."

"A rôle that will suit you admirably. Already I foresee delightful pictures in the *Sketch* and *Tatler*."

Rosamund smiled happily. "Yes, it's wonderful. Do you know, Michael is *delighted*. I didn't really think he would be." She paused and added: "Susan's got the malachite table. I thought, as I was having a baby——" She left the sentence unfinished.

"Susan's cosmetic business promises well," said Helen. "I think she is all set for a big success."

"Yes, she was born to succeed," said Poirot. "And the husband?"

"Greg's away somewhere," said Rosamund. "Having a rest cure, Susan says."

"Ah, so?" said Poirot. He selected another éclair from the plate in front of him and turned to Helen. "And you, madame, are off to Cyprus?"

"Yes, in a fortnight's time."

"Then let me wish you a happy journey."

Later, when he was leaving, Helen Abernethie went with him to the door.

She said abruptly: "I should like you to know, M. Poirot, that the legacy Richard left me meant more to me than theirs did to any of the others."

"As much as that, madame?"

"Yes. You see—there is a child in Cyprus. My husband and I were very devoted—it was a great sorrow to us to have no children. After he died my loneliness was unbelievable. When I was nursing in London at the end of the war, I met someone. . . . He was younger than I was and married, though not very happily. We came together for a little while. That was all. He went back to Canada, to his wife and children. He never knew about—our child. With Richard's money I can educate my so-called nephew, and give him a start in life." She paused. "You know so much about us all that I thought I would like you to know this about me."

Poirot bowed over her hand.

HE got home to find the armchair on the left of the fireplace occupied. "Hallo, Poirot," said Mr. Entwhistle. "I've just come back from the Assizes. They brought in a verdict of Guilty, of course. But I shouldn't be surprised if she ends up in Broadmoor. She's gone definitely over the edge since she's been in prison. Quite happy, you know, and *most* gracious. She spends her time making the most elaborate plans to run a chain of tea shops. Her newest establishment is to be the Lilac Bush. She's opening it in Cromer."

"One wonders if she was a little mad? But me, I think not."

"Good Lord, no. Sane as you and I when she planned that murder. Carried it out in cold blood."

Poirot gave a little shudder. "I am thinking," he said, "of some words that Susan Banks said—that she had never imagined a *ladylike* murderer."

"Why not?" said Mr. Entwhistle. "It takes all sorts."

They were silent, and Poirot thought of murderers he had known. . . .

THE END

Agatha Christie's "After The Funeral" will be published in book form on May 18 by William Collins, price 10s. 6d.

"I only hope that you can keep that sense of humour when I tell you the price"

A PLACE FOR JOE

Continued from page 17

really believed what he was saying, or was just being stubborn. "I've been forty years in football, playing and managing. I've earned a reputation for fair dealing with my men. Anybody in the game will know that if I part with Joe Riley, it'll only be for one reason. It's not simply because you're thirty-seven years old! There's nothing wrong with you that's not wrong with me and Ben and thousands of other footballers who've had to make this decision to hang up their boots——"

"You and Ben, perhaps, Mr. Burgess. But not me—yet." He gave a queer sort of grin. "I tell you, I'm still O.K."

"But Joe——"

"Give me any test you like. I'll prove it!"

I put down my cigar and looked him squarely in the face. "It's not a question of tests, Joe. And I didn't make up my mind about you in five minutes, either. For weeks, now, I've been at that window, watching you. Hoping to God I wouldn't have to speak like I'm speaking now. But—you seem to think I'm talking through my hat. Heaven knows why! Don't you realize you're the finest goalkeeper the Dragons ever had?"

Joe answered slowly. His face had gone pink. "I have heard it said. But all that seems to be forgotten now. I'm a 'veteran' already in all the sports columns. After this—if I don't move—it'll be 'has-been.' I think a clean break all round is what's needed. There are plenty of other teams in the League. . . ."

I threw up my hands. "I'm sorry, Joe. But—if your mind's made up, there's no more to be said. If you'll let me have your transfer request in writing, I'll see what can be done."

He nodded and went out without another word.

If it had been left to the two of us, I suppose that was how it would have ended; but it wasn't. People seem to forget that footballers are human beings with sweethearts or wives and children. The things that happen off the field, away from the roaring crowd, are the important events. And that night, when I was feeling pretty low over what had happened, I got a telephone call that suddenly had me grinning like a lunatic and wanting to swing from the chandelier.

It was Cora, Joe's wife, who told me what led up to that telephone call. I popped down to see her one afternoon when Joe was away.

CORA's a shrewd girl, and a pretty one, with a bit of Welsh in her. She'd been worried about Joe for some time, she said. He'd got home later than usual that evening after seeing me. He must have been out walking all day, but, of course, Cora didn't know he'd left the ground after speaking to me in the morning. But from the flush on his cheek and the way his jacket collar was turned up, she guessed he'd been on the moors. He only did that when he had something on his mind.

Joe muttered "Hallo" to her and to Pete, their boy, and sank heavily into an armchair by the fire. For some minutes he sat staring into the grate in silence. The boy was hunched over the table, absorbed in what he was doing. It was the snip of scissors that seemed to rouse Joe from his reverie.

"What are you doing, son?"

"My scrapbook, Dad."

Joe smiled faintly. Pete's scrapbook! Every line, every picture that had ever been printed about the Dragons had gone into that book, ever since Pete had been old enough to hold a pair of scissors.

"Dad, a boy at school saw the game yesterday."

"Did he, son?" Joe's face betrayed no more than mild interest. "What did he think of it?"

"Gosh, Dad . . . !" And suddenly the floodgates of Pete's enthusiasm burst open. "Dad, isn't he terrific! Everybody's saying so. There hasn't been anyone like Grant since—since *you* joined the Dragons! Here's his picture from this morning's paper."

Joe stood up and went over to the table. He looked over the boy's shoulder at a photograph of Grant making a full-length save. His eyes travelled to Pete's face and rested there searchingly for a moment.

"Yes, son. He's pretty good."

"'Course, Dad, he isn't in the same class as you used to be. But you'll get the best out of him. . . ."

Cora was standing now, watching Joe, holding her breath with anxiety to see how he'd take it. She saw him wince at the words "used to be," but after that, as Pete went on chatting, his expression slowly changed. First, he looked puzzled; then mildly amused. Finally, he sat down at the table, listening to the boy as he would have listened to a grown man.

"If only they'd play Grant in the Cup game!" Pete was saying. "He could soon be up to Cup standard if you worked on him, Dad. . . ."

SUDDENLY Cora felt the tension inside her relax. As she looked at Joe, she knew that the battle was more than half won. Pete had not the slightest idea what had been happening in his father's mind. Pete, whose judgment had no strings, hadn't even considered his father as a possible for the Cup! Cora wanted to laugh and cry at once.

Pete was doing what she herself had wanted to do so often in the past few weeks. He was doing it quite unconsciously—because he wasn't afraid of hurting his father. He was making Joe see that his future was with the Dragons; not to play, but to guide, as another trainer had once guided him; and that the most important thing in the world—for them all—was to train up young Grant. Above all, that it was good to be a veteran at thirty-seven.

Presently, Joe got up and went slowly to the telephone. Cora knew, then, that it was all over. He was ringing me, Tim Burgess, whose guts he'd been hating all day, to tell me he'd changed his mind, and was the job still open?

* * *

Cora stopped speaking. The street door had opened noisily and a boisterous young man tore into the room. Pete stopped, somewhat awed when he saw me.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Burgess. I didn't know——"

"Hallo, Pete," I said, smiling.

Cora sent him off to wash his hands, and poured out tea for him. She said, quickly, before he came down again: "Tell me frankly, Mr. Burgess, is this job going to satisfy Joe? I mean, he's heard the cheers for years, and now—he's rather in the background, isn't he?"

"Being in the background isn't so bad, Cora," I said. "I'm in the background. And you're in the background. Being in the background can be pretty useful and important."

"I know that, but will he—I mean, is there a good future for him?"

"Yes," I said, and just then Pete came back in the room, without the rocket propulsion as before. I caught Cora's eyes glowing at him. "Yes," I said again. "There's plenty of future for Joe."

THE END

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DAVID ECCLES, HUSTLING SHOWMAN OF THE CORONATION

Continued from page 9

at the annexe: Eccles had spotted that the King was in deep shadow due to an overhanging annexe frontal piece. He accordingly instructed the Ministry's chief architect to design a transparent canopy to aid the cameramen.

Much of his colour-planning has been done with an eye on the cameras. "Such money as we have to spend," he admitted recently, "I am concentrating where the colour film will be shot." Eccles asked to be kept informed when a film company took some test shots of Coronation troops. These proved that khaki was too drab, and Eccles had several talks at the War Office about alternative colours for uniforms. He also met the First Lord of the Admiralty to get his permission to fly the Fouled Anchor flag on Admiralty Arch, "because I liked the colours."

Talent That Films Missed

His colour-enthusiasm led him to urge government departments to break away from flag-flying only, and to use plaques, flowers and banners. He is also commissioning twenty artists to do paintings at different points along the Royal route. "Where colour and design come into it," says a friend, "David doesn't miss a thing. Michael Balcon missed a natural art director."

As Minister of Works, Eccles is more normally concerned as provider, furnisher and maintenance man of public buildings, including embassies and consulates abroad, Royal parks, and ancient monuments. Trafalgar Square is also in his charge and he recently introduced a system of licences for photographers and the sellers of food for pigeons, after complaints by M.P.s that people were being pestered.

"I have been living a double life," says Eccles of his workaday and Coronation functions. "There are days, I am glad to say, when bricks don't come into them." This is a reference to his work as co-ordinator-in-chief of the building and building materials industries. "You have heard about my being tough over the Coronation," he confided to a friend recently, "but you ought to hear what I say to the brick-makers, cement manufacturers and builders."

Changes His Collections

Eccles lives in a converted posting inn named Salutation House across the road from the House of Commons. It was used as a background for the film, *Pickwick Papers,* and is decorously filled with English water colours and drawings. Before the war Eccles had one of the best collections of Impressionist works outside an art gallery: it included two Cézannes, two Renoirs and a Dégas. One night he decided to sell them all. "Every five years or so he has a change," says his wife Sybil, daughter of Lord Dawson of Penn. "He sells his collection and starts another."

During the war, when Eccles was an unpaid economist at the Ministry of Production, he invited two colleagues to go third-shares with him in buying rare books on South America. He gave an assurance that they would appreciate in value. "We were having none of it," recalls Mary Bullock, one of the two, and now Eccles's private secretary. "How I've regretted it ever since!"

As long as his friends remember Eccles has had a nose for making money. Born the son of a Harley Street doctor on September 18, 1904 (he is the great-great-grandson of John Loudon McAdam, inventor of the macadamized road) he went almost automatically to Winchester College and then to New College, Oxford, where he showed that culture and commerce can meet by buying and selling first editions. In 1926 he began work as a clerk in the Central Mining and Investment Corporation, and thirteen years later, at thirty-five, he was manager of the £4,000,000 house.

Eccles made the first speech of his life in 1943, when he was adopted as Conservative candidate at Chippenham. The M.P., Victor Cazalet, had died in an air crash, and Eccles had to fight a by-election, despite the wartime inter-party agreement, because an Independent Liberal decided to stand. "David was raw, green, a poor speaker," recalls a helper. He scraped in by 195 votes.

Later, his speeches inside and outside the House of Commons were marred by hesitations and a tendency to think too much as he talked. But what he said gradually attracted more attention. At Sturminster, Dorset, on August 4, 1951, he made a speech which was said to have "shaken the old guard of his party to its blue boots." In it, he said his party should not be identified with the rich, but with "the active producers of wealth. Those who manage or one day dream they will manage a factory, shop or farm." Churchill ordered it to be printed as a pamphlet, called *The New Conservatism.*

Off-the-Cuff Eloquence

Eccles is finicky about his speeches. He writes the original draft at a furious pace, but then spends hours recasting and polishing. Mostly, he writes at his small farmhouse at Chute, in Wiltshire. But, despite his regard for preparedness, Eccles sometimes has to make extempore speeches. His wife is not surprised by his off-the-cuff eloquence. "He reads a lot," she says, "and has the memory of an elephant."

The Eccleses have three children—John, who is twenty-one; Simon, eighteen; and Polly, sixteen. For some time the boys have been raiding their father's well-stocked wardrobe: he collects colourful waistcoats and is known as an expert on women's as well as men's fashions. John is keen on a political career—"He will have to earn a living first," says his father—and Simon has Dad's money flair. As a schoolboy, Simon was found to be keeping a Stock Exchange book. By imaginary deals, he had made a paper profit of £2,000. "He'd forgotten all sorts of things like stamp duty and commission," Eccles once confided to a friend. "But it was a good start."

Like most Ministers, Eccles takes a lot of his work home with him. For some weeks he got into the habit of stuffing his briefcase with Coronation samples—felt, linen and carpet. "But," says Sybil Eccles, "he likes to suffer out his big problems alone." One weekend, when they were at Chute, she went into a bedroom and found Eccles sitting on the bed holding up two coathangers fitted with trouser bars.

Slung over them were two gaily coloured old school scarves. "He was manipulating them this way and that, at arm's length. It turned out that he was not satisfied with the single-banner standards they had for the last Coronation, and was testing out a theory he had for crossed banners." THE END

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FORGOTTEN PEOPLE

Continued from page 15

Kaibal, the birds could live "as long as one is a child"—their feathers are tugged out every time they grow. The white cockatoos, which appeared to be the special care of the old men, had a somewhat better lot. They had their wings clipped and were trained to sit on a stick which the old man looking after them carried about with him. They, too, were continually having their feathers plucked out, and they looked grotesque, like naked, pink, large-eyed caricatures of birds.

After staying in Meguagi the expedition continued making its way down to the jungle plain that lies south of the Jimmi River, passing a number of smaller villages on the offsets of the mountains. When spending the night in one of these, called Bunkri, we learned that it was the last and most northerly Papuan village. Beyond it, on the other side of the river, began the pygmies' country.

Jungle Children's Hour

There is often strife between the Papuan villages on the southern fringe of the jungle plain and the pygmies, but even among themselves the Papuan tribes are sometimes far from peaceful.

In Bunkri I had an opportunity of watching how the verbal traditions of the savages are preserved from generation to generation. One evening I was told that the youths of the village were to tell legends to the children. About ten youths sat in a cluster surrounded by their audience. One after the other they stood up and told a short legend about the combats of their forefathers or of their adventures with spirits.

Every now and again the speaker would be vehemently interrupted by his companions; obviously there had been something wrong in his account, and this was being corrected. I was told later that a narrator was interrupted if he said one wrong word, for the legends were learned by heart until they could be rattled off word for word. The elders are always present at these "children's hours" and they are very strict in seeing that the youths do not depart even by one word from the text they have been taught.

The combats of these legends were often ones in which the pygmies were the enemy. As these pygmies, who now live north of the Jimmi River among the Bismarck and Schräder Mountains, are presumed to have inhabited large parts of New Guinea before the arrival of the Papuans and then to have been driven into the inaccessible mountains, the Papuan tribes of the jungle plain were presumably the descendants of the last wave of attackers from the south.

This river valley, then, has perhaps for centuries been a no-man's-land between the intruders and the original inhabitants. Latterly there appear to have been periods when armed peace reigned between the pygmies and the Papuans, and a certain amount of barter trade took place between them. Their suspicion of each other is, however, still considerable, and the old rancour at times flares up and strife breaks out once more.

Nonetheless, the pygmies have built a hanging bridge of lianas across the Jimmi River, and the Papuans have respected this and never made use of it in their raids on the river.

An Unknown Frontier

The Jimmi River rises immediately west of snow-clad Mount Wilhelm and, after following the southern slopes of the Bismarck Mountains, flows into the Tagan River, fourteen miles north of the village of Bunkri. The two then become the River Yut and flow on towards the coast until they join the River Sepik.

The Jimmi and Tagan, which are largely only known from aerial photographs, run north-west, following the valleys south of the Bismarck and Schräder ranges, and constitute a natural frontier between the Papuans and the pygmies. It was in the neighbourhood of the confluence of these two rivers that the bridge which the

"Oh, madame!"

pygmies had built was supposed to be, and that was the objective of our next day's march.

A humid forest, consisting of really gigantic trees, covered the river valley. Here, for the first time, I saw the so-called walking trees. When you stand beside one of these trees, you see a score or so of thick "trunks" rising from the ground and arranged in a circle which has a diameter of anything up to sixteen feet. The trunks are like tent-poles about fourteen feet high, and at the top they unite to form a main trunk as thick and tall as a medium-sized oak tree.

Towards the middle of this tent-pole hut—the canvas is at times represented by a thick fabric of lianas and creepers—you will find the rotting remains of more slender poles. These upward shooting stems are really the tree's roots. As the tree grows and the first roots have sucked all the nourishment out of the soil, new roots grow out in the most suitable direction. In this way the tree can "walk" several yards in the course of the years.

The Bridge Builders

We reached the Jimmi River after a day's march and found it a roaring river about five hundred feet wide, with rocky banks. We were now at the foot of the Bismarck Mountains.

Gradually we probed our way towards the hanging bridge, where we planned to camp for the next week or two in the hope of being able to make contact with the dwarf highlanders living on the other side. Blood had sent messengers ahead to inform them of the peaceful intentions of the expedition, and also that they were welcome to visit us and sell food.

The suspension bridge was similar to the bridges of many other savage peoples. Apart from the "carriageway," which was composed of branches about eighteen inches long placed close together, the whole construction consisted entirely of ingeniously plaited lianas and sticks of bamboo, and had the abutments several yards higher up, each in a giant tree which was reached by a plaited rope ladder. The lianas which supported the whole construction were fastened high in the tree-tops.

When the pygmies, who cannot swim, wish to build such a bridge, their first task is to get a man with a liana over to the other side. This is how they do it.

A liana of sufficient length is fastened to a branch that juts out over the water from a tall tree at a place where there is another tall tree on the other side. The lower branches are then cut off so that the liana, to the end of which a man is fastened, can swing freely over the water.

The living pendulum is then set in motion and swung until the man is rising so high that he can get hold of a branch in the opposite tree. That achieved, the initial link is made and the bridge-building can begin. The finished bridge creaks and sways most horribly, but, being so elastic, it will support people with heavy burdens following closely one behind the other.

Beside the bridge we discovered an ideal site for a camp, and a creek with lovely, chalk-white, sandy bottom. During the day, I had, for the first time, seen birds of paradise out of captivity, and Blood told me that during the next few days we should be catching or shooting some for me to take back to Stockholm.

Fire On The Mountain

The day after we had made our big camp on the southern bank of the Jimmi River our messengers returned. They reported that they had found some members of a tribe of pygmies who called themselves the Suitani people, and whose villages lay high in the mountain massif we could see on the other side of the river. One of the chiefs had promised that he would come down to the hanging bridge the next day and later bring his tribe and sell us provisions.

That night we noticed the glow of a fire up on the mountainside about five hundred yards beyond the far side of the hanging bridge. That fire burned every night we were camped there. It proved to belong to a guard-hut, or, rather, a shelter of leaves and branches, where the dwarf people maintained a kind of outpost to keep watch on the bridge day and night.

It was very difficult to question either the Papuans or the pygmies about anything that concerned their mutual relations. The interpreters had difficulty enough in dealing with mere questions of foodstuffs and their purchase, and once one tried to go beyond such simple subjects, there was little to be got out of them except that they did not consider each other to be good neighbours, and that there was occasional strife between them.

It is therefore possible that the pygmies manned this post even when we were not there, to guard the path that led up into the mountain. It seemed impossible to attack the path successfully, however few the defenders. It was almost vertical; only one man could go up it at a time, and that with great difficulty and on all fours. As for the sides, I doubt whether even a monkey could have climbed them.

It seemed to be the only path for several miles. During the little daily rambles we made from the camp along this strange path and into the pygmies' country, we were constantly amazed that the pygmy women were able to make their way down it with their heavy burdens; that they were able to do so was due entirely to their being able to make almost as good use of their toes as of their fingers.

Warriors Came To Parley

On the next morning we saw that a bevy of tiny armed warriors had gathered at the guard-post, and shortly afterwards some of them came across the bridge to parley. Blood and the dwarfs had a lengthy conversation through our interpreter, the Papuan chief, who was more or less accustomed to dealing with them.

The tiny men asked for a guarantee that if they crossed the bridge with their women and children they would not be attacked either by us or by our porters, whom they evidently were now convinced to be out on a purely peaceful errand, nor by any Papuan tribe in the vicinity with whom they were at feud. The guarantee was given, and the diminutive diplomats shook hands with us and walked back across the bridge.

The handshake as a sign of friendship was obviously new to them, for when we put out our hands they were at a loss what to do; but after a few words from the interpreter-chief their hands shyly took ours. When we shook their hands they were delighted, and they shook ours repeatedly, their faces beaming.

Shortly after the pygmy envoys had returned across the bridge, we saw about ten men come down to the northern abutment and squat there in the shade of the great trees to which the bridge was fastened. Some hours passed and nothing happened. As we rightly guessed, they were waiting for the women.

Eventually they arrived, carrying their over-full bags on their backs like Papuan women. After a lot of lively chatter—the women were obviously being given their instructions—they all marched in a column across the creaking, swaying bridge of lianas. (A day later I counted about sixty pygmies on the bridge at one time, walking slowly and holding on to the lianas that served as the parapet. They moved across the frail sticks at a slow marching pace, keeping in step with each other, which evidently made the sway gentle and even.)

Camera Scared Them

In silence the entire column of about ten men and twenty women, with innumerable small children in and on top of their net bags, marched twice round and then on to the camp square. The women, and even some of the men, appeared to be very timid. The little chief directed proceedings, giving his orders in a shrill, commanding voice. When the women had squatted and removed their burdens, the men walked across to greet us.

The ones we had already met as envoys now took the initiative and shook hands vigorously, while the rest stood to one side, looking thoroughly awkward and afraid. With a distribution of gifts, which included some steel axes, they all thawed. They returned our handshakes and seemed to be considering us not only strange and mighty individuals, but also ridiculously liberal with our wonderful gifts.

This state of mutual satisfaction was suddenly shattered when Baglin, our photographer, approached the women with his camera. The moment he raised his camera, the whole lot sprang to

LIFE WITH FATHER

Here is the missing person from the photograph on page 21. He is dance-band leader Victor Silvester, playing chess with his son Victor.

their feet and disappeared, shrieking and clutching their young, into a large thicket of bamboos. The men were not long in getting them back, but it took several days before they got over their fear of us when visiting the camp. Blood's wife, Olga, was the first to win their confidence, and after that the rest of us were soon good friends with them; in the end, they would give us an easy greeting when they arrived on their daily visit to the camp.

Relations between the pygmy women and our porters were very chilly. The tiny women seemed to regard the porters with inherent mistrust; nor did the men appear to fraternize with them in any way. There was an obvious mutual suspicion, and because of that they avoided getting too close to one another.

Turbans Made Of Bark

These pygmies were completely different from the Papuans, both in build and appearance. To me, they appeared to have almost no negroid features at all; both men and women seemed to have finely cut features reminiscent of certain Indian peoples. This impression was strengthened by the bark turbans, mostly dyed red with vegetable juices, which many of them wore. In these they looked just like tiny bearded Mohammedans.

In contrast to the pictures I have seen of the African pygmies, who apparently are spindly and have large stomachs, thin legs, and not very pretty faces, most of these pygmies looked like miniature athletes with broad chests and well-developed calf muscles. Many of the men were good-looking.

So were the women, many of whom were really beautiful, even according to our ideas. They were proportionately much slenderer, and had more finely formed feminine limbs than the Papuan women. The young pygmy girls did not have the Papuans' podginess, nor did the elder women appear so worn out. The colour of the pygmies' skin was somewhat lighter than the Papuans', but I never saw any of those lighter-skinned individuals with lighter coloured hair that I noticed among the Papuans.

OH, JOHNNY! *by TIM*

The ornaments worn by these small men and women were different from those of their tall neighbours. The men did not wear so many, nor were they so gaudy. Those who wore turbans did their hair in a different way, making it look like a large mushroom that protruded flatly at the sides. Only exceptionally did they have one or more feathers stuck singly in their hair, and, when they did, they were rarely those of the bird of paradise or cassowary, presumably because these two birds are scarce in the districts where they hunt.

On the other hand, they often had birds' feet hanging among the small shells they wore round their necks, and here they sometimes wore a piece of tree kangaroo skin, which among the Papuans is worn almost exclusively by the women.

In their noses the pygmies had wooden pegs fixed horizontally in a hole, or a number of sticks, the size of matches, driven into holes in their nostrils, where they sat pointing obliquely upwards like spikes.

Neither the men nor the women painted their faces so lavishly as did the Papuans, especially the girls. We did occasionally see odd individuals with parts of their faces painted red. The pygmy women were the only ones I saw wearing the neck shields of mother-of-pearl, like military identity discs, which are the pride of the Papuan chiefs. Nor did the pygmies have tattooing on their chests.

The pygmies' way of life, their weapons, dwellings and domestic utensils, are not appreciably different from the Papuans'. They sold the same foodstuffs to us. Yet they did seem to go in for hens more extensively, for every day they sold us a large number of good, fat chickens. Again, they seemed to be more avid for salt, and often preferred it to cowrie shells as payment for their goods. If we gave the children a pinch of salt they would stuff it greedily into their mouths, and over their faces would spread the rapturous expression that European children have when they are given sweets.

How To Light Fires

How the pygmies dealt with their dead I was never able to discover, but I saw the same mutilated fingers that with the Papuans are a sign of mourning for a close relative.

One day I asked a pygmy to show me how he made fire. He produced from under his turban a kind of bast string and drove a dry stick into the ground, wound the string round its lower part, laid dry moss and leaves on top and began to rub the string swiftly round the stick. When it began to smoke he blew gently on the moss and leaves, and soon there was a little flame. I timed him: it took exactly three and a half minutes.

From our camp we went out every day to catch or shoot rare birds and to collect our beetles and butterflies. On our first excursion we came across some very rare birds. I was especially proud of a Little King of Paradise, a rare variety of which few specimens had previously been obtained, according to Blood.

These are wonderfully lovely birds, red with white, green and black markings, and metallic green plates on their long tail antennae; nearer the coast they have a horizontal black streak above the eye, but up in the mountain valleys the streak is vertical. That day we also shot some rhinoceros birds.

In the jungle south of the river one seldom saw flowers other than up in the trees, and then usually in the half-shadow under the tree-tops. To my mind, the strangest was a large yellow flower that caught and ate insects alive. This plant, which belongs to the Nepenthes family, emits an alluring scent of honey, by which the insects are induced to settle on the rim of the deep flower-cup. The inner wall of the cup is slippery, so that when the insect wishes to move down to the honey it presumes is to be found lower

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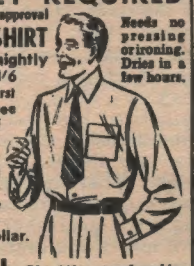

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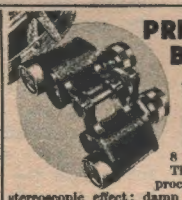

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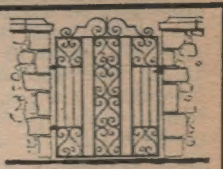

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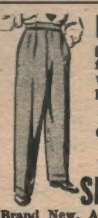

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down, it skids and falls to the bottom, where it gets caught in a sticky fluid and is "digested" by the flower. The bottom of the cup is often black with the insects it has caught.

Enchanted by some wonderful orchids, I thought I would take a collection home with me, and pressed a number of small specimens. I ought to have asked the advice of the omniscient Blood, for I found the whole lot ruined with mildew when we reached Nondugl. Those delicate plants, with their often thick and juicy stalks and leaves, are difficult to press, and will not stand up to transport in the damp heat of the jungle.

As well as hunting for rare birds, both in the jungle and on the mountain plateaux, we also were on the look-out for rats for the Swedish National Museum. We caught a rare and little-known water rat, *Orossomus*. This rodent, which is specially designed to live in water, has been equipped by Nature with a pair of oars; its back feet are webbed, and it has an excellent rudder formed by the skin under its tail.

Rat Size Of Rabbit

On one plateau we encountered an *Uromys*, a rat of the size of a rabbit, with a scaly tail. Some of the boys had been taught the rudiments of taxidermy and were able, under Blood's supervision, to skin the creatures we shot and cure the skins. It was necessary to be very particular about seeing that the arsenical paste was properly spread into every fold and wrinkle, otherwise insects would lay their eggs there. The skins were stuffed with cotton and, like my beetles, laid out to dry.

We were continually questioning the natives about the rumoured white bird of paradise which the Papuans of the Wahgi Valley had said was to be found round the Jimmi River. However, there was nothing to indicate that there was any such bird, and Blood considered that it must have been either an albino or some very light cross that had given rise to the rumour.

It was most probable, however, that the whole thing was just one of those confusions of ideas that the natives frequently have when they describe colour. Anything dark they call black, and everything light, white, since they do not have special names for the different colours.

One morning, while on one of our excursions southwards, we suddenly encountered a band of Papuan warriors in their war trappings, with blackened faces like Commandos, and torsos painted in glaring colours. Their approach, however, was friendly, and when we were able to get a closer look at them, we discovered that they were friends who had been in the camp to sell pigs. Their spokesman explained that, some days previously, men from one of the neighbouring villages had killed one of their number, and they were now going to waylay one of the men from that other village and do the same to him.

Life For A Life

It was a typical example of the blood feuds between the Papuan tribes and villages. They said, in reply to our questions, that they would kill only one man, for to kill more would be to incite strife that might last a long time and, anyway, they themselves had lost only one man. They were very definite about this, and no doubt thought our questions most extraordinary. Evidently, when villages settled accounts, they adhered rigidly to the rules of the game.

Just before we left our camp we again encountered some of these warriors, come this time to sell us three small cassowaries. Their war paint had now vanished, and when we asked how their retributive expedition had prospered, they replied disinterestedly that the matter was now cleared up. It was as though they felt that their memories ought not to be burdened long with such a routine matter.

NEXT WEEK: We discover a stone-age factory in the wilds

LAST OFFER OF FAMILY CORONATION SEATS!

PRIZES value over £1,000—THIS WEEK ONLY!

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1,569 OTHER PRIZES: £50, £25, £10, £9, £8, £7, £6, 2 of £5, 10 of £2 . 10s., 50 of 10s.

1,500 "Use-as-you-choose" Prizes

"SEASONS" as BONUSES A *Bullets* Season Ticket accompanies each of the 20 chief prizes won with *Bullet* which was one of four or more on single coupon or plain-paper entry sheet.

CASH AND CORONATION CAKES

This Way To Win

FIRST complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues below. Then, if you wish to enter *one* extra Answer to any *one*, *two* or *three* Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

Across Clues — **XWORD 836**

1. Flowers and fruits can sometimes be seen side by side on the same these
4. It runs when turned on
6. Magistrate gets used to recognizing this
8. May occasionally have to be turned out by farmer's wife before she gets on with her work again
9. Listeners don't always find it easy to appreciate the beauty of
12. There are a great many on average farm
13. Great many cricketers get, during season's play

Down Clues

1. Anyone can understand sharp rise in prices making one
2. May escape notice until going out
3. There's usually wisdom in one
4. A really sound speech can be marred by filling it out with such stuff
5. A book is quite commonly advertised as
7. Penny one is generally cheap
10. Lots of people with gardens have little or no this to help them
11. When mother of young kiddies is short, it's quite possible she will do this

£100 XWORD 1st PRIZE

AWARDS VALUE £25 among 1st Runners-up and up to

50 CORONATION CAKES

—one with each Runner-up Award value 10s. or over—to be received shortly before Coronation Day.

Up to 500 "SIGNPOST" PRIZES — one for each 2nd Runner-up

XWORD 831 RESULT

WINNING WORDS. ACROSS: 1, Bet. 5, Dungeon. 6, Tin. 10, Ride. 13, String. 14, Tie. DOWN: 1, Beet. 2, Bunch. 3, Rest. 4, Snack. 7, Manx. 8, Might. 9, Mines. 11, Lean. 12, Move.

£100 OUTRIGHT WINNER: M. Harding, 247 Central Drive, Blackpool, who also receives Coronation Cake.

Awards value £25 for 1st Runners-up shared by 20 entrants, each of whom receives Coronation Cake in addition. Useful "Signpost" Prizes awarded to 2nd Runners-up.

HOW TO WIN

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* below. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

Add 2, 3 or 4 Words to any of these "EXAMPLES"

In Westminster Abbey
Dove From Moscow
Winston's Innings
Coronation Visitor
Break In The Clouds
Day To Remember
Not Working
Children
All Mixed Up
A Beautiful Thing
The Bride
In Melting Mood
Sold
To Be Happy
One Of The Crowd
Glittering In The Sunshine
To Crown Everything
At Our Street Party
Thrill Of A Lifetime
When It's All Over

Incomplete "Examples" —see instructions

The ..... We Miss
A Cold.....
Romance In The.....
Can't Do.....
Not A Lot To.....
.....For A Holiday

"Bullets" Winners 1,879

FIRST PRIZE, £500 plus Television Set: C. H. Wilson, 42 Western Road, Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield:

It's A Gamble, But Risk Giving "Bear" Hug!

£50: H. Townson, 58 Bridge Street, High Wycombe: MADE HIS FORTUNE—MAKING EMPLOYEES FEEL FORTUNATE.

£25: G. B. Moore, 157 Crow Hill, Ringwood: WITH A FEW DOGGY—HAIRS, EVEN *Palace* CHAIRS!

OTHER AWARDS. £10: E. Hickey, 46 Melbourne Court, Anerley Road, S.E.20: ONE OF THE ARISTOCRACY—BRITANNIA—"PIMPERNEL SMITH" RESCUING. £9: H. Holmes, 220 Sharrow Lane, Sheffield: POUNCED ON—PICCANINNIES—AFRICA'S "DARKEST" YET! £8: W. Hamilton, 42 Hill Street, Glasgow: EMPTY—*Hours*, NO "REFUND" ON. £7: J. Howard, 19 Nettleton Road, Mirfield, Yorks: ONE OF THE ARISTOCRACY — BUT NOW UPPER *Tenant*! £6: J. Boyd, 23 Ancroft Street, Glasgow: THE STALIN STORY—PREFACING MALENKOV'S "GOOD COMPANIONS"? £5: E. Hardy, Bank House, Brows Lane, Formby: EMPTY—RUSSIAN "PEPPER-POT"? PASS SALT! £5: I. M. Williams, 65 Orme Road, Bangor, Caerns: SLEEPYTOWN'S COBWEBS—SWEPT, THIS "VINTAGE" YEAR!

For ten winners of £2 10s., see *"Bullets" Bulletin*, 50 *Bullets* Season Tickets and 1,500 "Good Shot" Prizes have also been posted.

RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit; the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.

2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are full rate. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s, if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests (in *Bulletin* and *Gazette*, dated May 30, and in JOHN BULL dated June 6), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, May 23, for early news of *Bullets* No. 1,884 result.)

CORONATION CAKES EXCLUSIVELY for XWORDS

In adjudication, all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with one extra Answer to *one* Clue will represent *two* full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.). Square with one extra Answer to *two* Clues will represent *four* full Squares (Entry-fee 1s.) and Square with one extra Answer to *three* Clues will represent *eight* full Squares (Entry-fee 2s.).

Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps covers dispatch to you of *Crossword Gazette* dated May 23.

Winner—Sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature indicates agreement to Rules.

1S	T	A	2L		3S		4T	A		
T	O	■	■	■	A	■	R	I	■	
O	■	5R	M	■	6G	U	I	L		
R	E	A	P	■	■	■	■	■	■	
■	■	■	■	7B	■	8	E	N	■	
■	9B	E	L	L	■	■	■	E	10G	
11S	E	■	O	O	■	E	W	E	R	
■	■	12R	O	O	■	S	■	D	A	
A	G	O	■	■	■	P	A	S	S	
13P	A	I	■	■	E	Y	E	836		

CLUE	EXTRA ANSWER	Total Fee
No.		6d.
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No.		2s.

(Total fee shown includes entry on Square)

Puzzle and form strictly copyright **836** Closing Postmark MON., MAY 11

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STICK 2½d. STAMP here for *"Bulletin"*

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